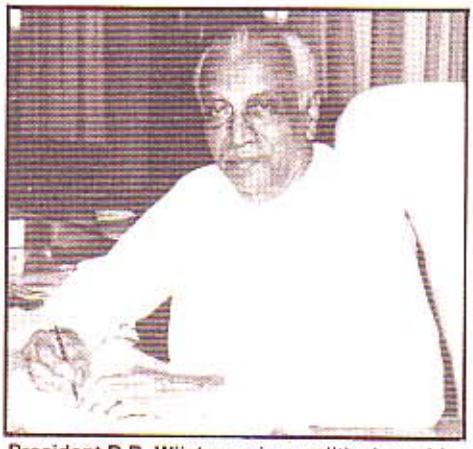
Tamil TIMES

Vol XIII No.7 ISSN 0266-4488 15 JULY 1994 90p

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

UK/India/Sri Lanka.....£15/$25
Australia.....Aus$45
Canada.....Can$40
USA.....$35
All Other Countries £20/US$35

General Election : A Time for Change



President D.B. Wijetunge in a political gamble

MESSAGE TO UNP, LOUD & CLEAR

Elections – The Main Issues

TAMIL GROUPS IN CHAOTIC ELECTORAL SCRAMBLE

Problems and Prospects if the Opposition Wins

NEGOTIATING A MORAL PEACE

Visit to War-ravaged Jaffna by BBC Reporter

★ **SECESSION, GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS AND PEACE**

★ **'How I Became a Freedom Fighter' – V. Prabhakaran**

LTTE Leader V. Prabhakaran – No to Elections

Exclusive Right to Write History

Tamil Nadu – Politics of Reservation

European Parliament Resolution on Sri Lanka

Chandrika Kumaranatunga, Western Province Chief Minister – Leading the Opposition

TAPROBANE TRAVEL

IATA QUALITY IN AIR TRANSPORT

"The Reliable Agent"

IATA QUALITY IN AIR TRANSPORT

(Over 100,000 Satisfied Clients Since 1977)

FREE Airconditioned Transport from Katunayake to Colombo
for all our clients purchasing tickets for travel in July/August

AIRLANKA - TOP AGENT 1992/93 -
LEADING AGENT 1994

CURRENT FARES TO COLOMBO

23/7 - 15/8 London/Colombo/London £630
16/8 - 30/11 " " " £485

ALSO SPECIAL FARES TO DUABI,MADRAS,TRICHI,T'VANDRUM,S'PORE, KUALA LUMPUR ,BANGKOK & HONGKONG

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines

Fly the Difference KLM

Top Agent To Colombo 1992/93
Leading Agent 1994

Current Fares:

23/7 - 15/8 London/Colombo/London £600
16/8 - 31/8 " " " £485
01/9 - 30/11 " " " £430

Special fares to Sydney/Melbourne

Instant confirmation of seats from our allocation

No waitlist! No waiting! No hassle!

GULF AIR

15/7 - 15/8 London/Colombo/London £ 550
16/8 - 30/11 " " " £ 395

AN EMERGENCY PHONE SERVICE - ONLY FOR IMMEDIATE TRAVEL
0860 439 483

For reservations contact our Travel Consultants-

Kamini,Daphne,John or Upali

Access

VISA

London Office
4,Kingly Street,London W1R 5LF Tel: 071-437 6272/3, 071-734 9078
Colombo Office- 252,Galle Road,Colombo 4.Tel: 587767

Colombo Office- 252 Galle Road,Colombo 4.Tel: 587767

'I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it.'
– Voltaire.

Tamil TIMES

ISSN 0266-4488

Vol.XIII No.7
15 JULY 1994

Published by

TAMIL TIMES LTD
P.O. BOX 121
SUTTON, SURREY SM1 3TD
UNITED KINGDOM

Phone: 081-644 0972
Fax: 081-241 4557

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

UK/India/Sri Lanka	**£15/US$25**
Australia	**Aus$45**
Canada	**Can$40**
USA	**US$35**
All other countries	**£20/US$35**

Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the editor or publishers

The publishers assume no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, photographs or artwork

CONTENTS

Election News Review. 4
Message to UNP Seems Clear. . . . 6
News Review. 7
Elections – The Main Issues. 9
Tamil Groups in a Scramble. 10
Problems and Prospects if the Opposition Wins. 13
Visit to War-torn Jaffna. 14
Negotiating a Moral Peace. 15
How I Became a Freedom Fighter – V. Prabhakaran. 18
The Exclusive Right to Write Eelam History. 20
Secession, Nationalist Guerrilla Movements and Peace. 23
Readers' Forum. 26
Sub-Continental Scene. 27

TIME FOR CHANGE

President D.B. Wijetunga has taken a calculated risk in prematurely dissolving parliament and going for general elections. His action has all the hallmarks of a political gamble by a person who was becoming week by week, more and more frightened of the growing strength of the opposition Peoples Alliance. On the other hand, the United National Party (UNP), after seventeen years in power, has been displaying signs of terminal disunity and disintegration. The President, therefore, would appear to have decided on this course thereby taking the opposition by surprise in the expectation that if the general election is held without giving the opposition the time and opportunity to organise and prepare itself, then the UNP may still have a chance of retaining power.

During the seventeen year rule by the UNP, the island witnessed one of the most violent periods in its long history. It produced no solution to the ethnic conflict in the northeast nor to the youth unrest in the south. The ethnic conflict, which the government sought to resolve by military means, has resulted in tens of thousands being killed and millions displaced. The JVP rebellion and the government's counter-insurgency terror in the late 1980s were accompanied by tens of thousands being killed or 'disappeared' in the south of the country.

Springing from the highest positions of the state, abuse of power, corruption, bribery, patronage, nepotism and racketeering have become endemic and characterise all aspects of governmental activity. The rich have become richer and richer while the poor have been driven to the wall.

After ruling the country for seventeen years and having brought about the very problems that the country faces today, it is difficult for the people to place trust on the promises by the ruling party in its manifesto to abolish the executive presidency, clean up public life by removing corruption and bribery and bring about a political solution to the ethnic conflict.

One of the redeeming aspects of the current election campaign is that neither the ruling party nor the main opposition Peoples Alliance is engaged in a Tamil minority bashing campaign. In the past, both the UNP and the SLFP had tried to outbid each other for the role of the champion of the Sinhala-Buddhist electorate by appealing to their base prejudices and instincts. In these elections, both the UNP and the SLFP-LSSP-CP led Peoples Alliance seem to be interested in wooing the Tamil and Muslim voters whose support is recognised as decisive to the outcome as to which party is going to be returned to power.

Though the elections cover the whole island, in the areas of the north controlled by the LTTE, particularly in the Jaffna and adjoining districts, a substantial majority of the voters there will certainly not be taking part, as the LTTE has declared its opposition to holding the elections. To that extent, these elections can be said to be flawed from a Tamil point of view. However, what is of significance is that what happens in the rest of the country will certainly have a bearing on the future course of events concerning the conduct of the war and the resolution of the ethnic question.

One of the most destructive features of one party being in power for so long is the progressive disappearance of the distinctions between the institutions of the state and those of the ruling party. The organs and machinery of the state have been gradually transformed into instruments that serve the ruling party and its interests.

The forthcoming general election offers for the first time a realistic challenge and an opportunity to the people to bring about a change in the way the government of the country has been run for the last seventeen years.

ELECTION NEWS REVIEW

★ **Parliamentary Elections:** 1140 candidates representing 39 political parties and independent groups are contesting the parliamentary general elections to be held on 16 August. Nominations closed on 15 July. Elections will be held in all 22 electoral districts, including the northern districts most areas of which are under LTTE control, for the island's 225 seat parliament – 196 of them will be directly elected, and the balance of 29 will be allocated in proportion to the votes each party receives at the election. Eleven million of the island's seventeen million people are entitled to vote.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe is leading the ruling United National Party campaign and the Chief Minister of the Western Provincial Council Mrs. Chandrika Kumaranatunga is leading the main opposition Peoples Alliance campaign. After 17 years in power, the UNP is facing a strong challenge from the PA. Some commentators predict a keenly fought election with a PA victory over the UNP which is riven by internal conflict, desertions and suffers from a lack of charismatic leadership.

On the other hand the Peoples Alliance has been strengthened of late by a number of intellectuals joining the SLFP beginning with the distinguished professor of law Mr. G.L. Peiris who resigned as Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo two months ago to do full-time political work. Others who have been engaged in assisting Chandrika to draw up the PA's policy documents and manifesto include another distinguished economist Dr. Lal Jayawardene and Prof. Wishwa Warnapala. These intellectuals have helped the PA to draw up a comprehensive election manifesto.

On the day nominations closed, violence broke out between party activists of the opposition and government parties in several electoral districts including Colombo, Kandy, Galle and Anuradhapur. Police fired teargas to disperse thousands of supporters of the ruling UNP and the main opposition Peoples Alliance. Whether violence and thuggery will accompany the election campaign is a serious worry to many. Much more worrying is whether there would be a repeat of the massive post election violence as in 1977 when the UNP was returned to power.

★ **Putting Party at Risk:** During their time, confident of victory, former Presidents J.R. Jayawardene and R. Premadasa chose to go for presidential elections first to be followed by parliamentary elections in the course of which they deployed the full might of the executive presidency to achieve victory for the UNP. Observers believe that President D.B. Wijetunga went for parliamentary elections first because he was unsure that he would win against the Peoples Alliance candidate, whether it be Mrs. Bandaranaike or Chandrika Kumaranatunga, in the presidential election due anytime before the end of this year and thereby he has embarked on a course which exposes his party to the risk of losing power before he lost it.

★ **Mrs. Premadasa Denied Nomination:** Before nominations closed, all the indications were that the wife and son of the assassinated former President Premadasa would be granted UNP nominations to contest the Colombo Central and Hambantota electorates respectively. Eventually neither were given party nomination.

The disappointed widow of the late President, Mrs. Hema Premadasa who had gone to the Colombo Election Secretariat (Kachcheri) to sign her nomination papers, walked out after discovering that nomination papers had been withdrawn by the UNP. 'I went this morning because I wanted to contest. But my name was not there', she said to the press.

The UNP had earlier made overtures to Mrs. Premadasa and Sajith Premadasa to contest under the party ticket, but they were reluctant. But they changed their mind after being persuaded by President Wijetunga and UNP General Secretary, Dr. Gamini Wijesekera. The Premadasa family members feel that the denial of the party ticket at the last moment to the widow and son of the late President is a betrayal and deliberate attempt to insult and humiliate them.

Political analysts in Colombo feel that denying nomination to Mrs. Premadasa would be a setback to the ruling party as it would antagonise the followers of the late President Premadasa who had a substantial support base among the rural communities.

★ **Return of the JVP:** The reemergence of the JVP under the guise of the National Salvation Front (Deshaya Galavaganeeme Peramuna) with the prospect of Mr. Somawansa Amarasinghe, who has been in self-imposed exile in Paris, returning to the island and becoming the Front's leader was predicted a few weeks before the parliament was dissolved. The NSF was to be a coalition of the JVP, the Sri Lanka Progressive Front led by Ariya Bulegoda and other nondescript political groups.

Since its crushing and murder of its leaders by the security forces in late 1989, the remnants of the JVP had been not only forced to go underground and incognito but also the JVP itself as an organisation rent asunder into three or more factions, of which reportedly Somawansa leads the major faction. Somawansa is the sole surviving member of the 13 member JVP politburo and the circumstances surrounding his escape from capture have come under grave accusations of collaboration and betrayal from his erstwhile colleagues in the JVP. A close relative of cabinet minister Mr. Sirisena Cooray, Somawansa was the only known leader of the JVP who managed to escape capture. With the help from some highly placed personalities in the government itself and assisted by a senior army official, Somawansa escaped to India and lived there for many months and thereafter he managed to go to Europe. The army officer has since been punished by

authorities for his part in Somawansa's escape.

As he had been declared a wanted JVP man, whether Somawansa would be taken into custody or not would depend on any 'understanding' he might have come to with the government. From the UNP's point of view, it might be advantageous for the emergence of an extremist 'third force' which would divide the anti-UNP vote. Chandrika is already on record of having alleged that the government was instigating the creation of such a force.

The applications for the registration of the NSF as a political party was handed over to the Commissioner of Elections during the fourth week of June, but the Commissioner has refused registration as the application was submitted too late. Now the pro-JVP candidates are contesting the elections and campaign under the banner of the Sri Lanka Progressive Front which has put up candidates in 17 of the 22 electoral districts.

In the meantime, the NSSP's General Secretary Dr. Wickrema Bahu Karunaratne has announced a split in the party. NSSP's most charismatic and popular leader Vasudeva Nanayakkara and some of his close colleagues are reported to have been expelled by the Bahu faction which control's the NSSP. It is reported that Vasudeva has rejoined his old party the LSSP which is a constituent of the Peoples Alliance under which he will be contesting at the elections.

Dr. Bahu is reported as having told the press that he had sent a message to Somawansa urging him to return to the island to participate in a new alliance of Ariya Bulegoda's Progressive Front, JVP, NSSP and Muslim Progressive Front.

★ **Elections in the Northeast:** The LTTE will not countenance elections in the areas under its control, and that means substantial areas of the north including the Jaffna peninsula. Their attitude to the elections became self evident from the fact that the Government Agent of Jaffna, Mr. K. Manickavasagar has been prevented by the Tigers from leaving Jaffna for Colombo to receive instructions from the government and the Commissioner of Elections as to the conduct of the elections. The government had summoned the GA to go to Colombo with a view to directing him to shift the election Secretariat in Jaffna to Tellipalai, an area controlled by the security forces.

Speculation by many that the LTTE, with a view to preventing the other Tamil groups from gaining representation in parliament, might promote an independent group comprising those who would be supportive of them to contest the elections has not materialised.

'We are not prepared to be fooled or deceived. We don't believe in warming the seats of parliament and therefore we shall not take part in the general elections', LTTE spokesman told a meeting in Jaffna. 'We have no necessity to go to Colombo to administer Jaffna. . .We have laid the foundation for an independent Eelam and have strengthened our position. . .After the general elections, there may be a party with progressive ideas coming to power. That party may call for a ceasefire and initiate talks with us. If that happens, we will have talks with that party', he added. In spite of the fact that the LTTE has rejected participation in the elections, observers believe that people in the eastern province will overwhelmingly take part and that the LTTE will be unsuccesful in mounting a disruption campaign. In the north however, particularly in the Jaffna peninsula the substantial majority of the people will be prevented from taking part of voting. But in what is described as 'cleared areas' of the north including the offshore islands and certain pockets in the peninsula itself and Vavuniya and Mannar districts which are under army control will be able to participate.

But what is of concern is that the areas under government control in the northern Jaffna peninsula accommodate only about 7,000 of the registered voters of the north. In the event of polls being held in these areas, the bizarre outcome will be that this limited number of voters will be returning 13 Members of Parliament who would be deemed to represent some 600,000 people!

The Tamil United Liberation Front, the Tamil Congress and the EPRLF protested to the government and the Commissioner of elections that a fair and free elections could not be held in Jaffna and demanded that the elections there be postponed. The TULF's legal challenge filed in the courts in respect of holding the elections in Jaffna has proved unsuccesful.

★ **Deputy Speaker Crosses Over to PA:** Well known popular film star and former Deputy Speaker, Gamini Fonseka, who had been having a long running battle with the UNP leadership, has crossed over to the Peoples Alliance and promptly he was included in its National List. The ease with which this staunch UNP personality and known as an ardent loyalist of the former President Premadasa was admitted into the PA and given nomination has disturbed many Alliance supporters.

The PA called a press conference on 7 July to take full advantage of Gamini's cross-over, but soon he sparked off a row and a near walkout by journalists when he called the veteran and much respected journalist Lucian Rajakarunanayake 'a liar' and 'a drunk'.

Mr. Fonseka during his comments to the press made allegations of corruption against four UNP cabinet ministers and alleged that parliamentary privilege had been used to frustrate investigations against them. In response, Lucian asked the former Deputy Speaker whether he himself had not used parliamentary privilege to prevent the investigation into allegation of a false claim he had made from the Insurance Corporation of Sri Lanka. This question from the journalist led to an acriminious argument between the two in the course of which Mr. Fonseka called the journalist a liar and a drunk. After protests by other journalists, Mr. Fonseka withdrew the offending words.

Continued on page 19

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Message to the UNP Seems Loud and Clear

from Rita Sebastian, Colombo

Four political widows, at last count, joining the election fray. A sister and brother in a vicious slanging match. A leading politician threatening to visit the ghosts of 50,000 young men and women on the ruling party, and a former insurgent who has flown in from London to contest the poll. These are some of the bizarre ingredients of Sri Lanka's 1994 general election.

This round of elections, despite the farcical touches, are different from the 1989 election in that the contest seems to be personality-oriented rather than policy oriented.

Leading the campaign from the two opposing camps is Prime Ministerial aspirant Chandrika Kumaranatunge of the SLFP, and its present incumbent, the UNP's Ranil Wickremesinghe.

While Kumaranatunge is aggressive and pushy, Wickremesinghe is shy to the point of being self-effacive. In the island's rural electorate Kumaranatunge is seen as the new messiah, while the UNP bereft of 'the man of the masses' former President Ranasinghe Premadasa, has still to find base.

Adding spice to the goings-on is the SLFP accusation that the UNP plagiarised its manifesto. This rather comical story tells its own tale.

There is for the first time in the history of SLFP – UNP politics a marked convergence of both economic and political policies. The SLFP led People's Alliance (PA), despite the fact that it has the old left on its bandwagon, is committed to the policies of the free market with only partial modifications. Chandrika Kumaranatunge, deputy leader of the SLFP, has made it plain that she wants to reform the system, rather than destroy it. The SLFP is against what she calls 'crony capitalism' and has promised to give it a human face.

This year's election is also different in that the shadow of vigilante death squads that operated freely in the 1988-89 elections is absent. There is also an absence of fear, and debate in the press, specially in the tabloids is lively.

What is more, the youth vote variously estimated at 1.8 – 2.4 million will be decisive. For the moment it would appear that the SLFP with its old left – new left affiliations would cream off most of the youth vote.

A spooky touch to the debate was introduced by SLFP MP, C.V. Gunaratne known for his acid tongue, that the UNP must be haunted by the ghosts of the 50,000 youth killed in the anti-JVP operations in 1988-89. This is a polemical point but touches on an issue few are willing to talk about freely, and for many, too heartbreaking to brush aside.

No doubt violence has left many painful scars, particularly in the deep south. What the result is going to be is yet to be seen but the UNP's base could be affected by the haunting memories of the 1980s massacres. It is said that Sri Lankan public memory is notoriously short, but there are determined efforts by the opposition to deliberately rake up the past.

The UNP for its part has replied by publishing advertisements which recall the harrowing days of Mrs. Bandaranaike's regime when the country was beset with queues and shortages.

However this is too far in the past to serve as ready electoral ammunition. It is the more recent happenings in parliament, the extravagant and corrupt style of the UNP which is being made the focus of public attention.

It has been a tradition with the Sri Lankan voter to vote out governments rather than vote them in. So the SLFP alliance is counting on a fair measure of the anti-government vote.

Although the UNP was able to woo and win the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), the powerful plantation trade union led by Minister S. Thondaman, into its fold, the once cohesive trade union has now several strands to it. There is its former General Secretary, S. Sellasamy expelled from the CWC, contesting on the PA ticket, and the Upcountry Plantation Workers Front led by young Chandrashekaran.

It is reported that intermediaries have tried to bring Chandrasekaran into the CWC fold by offering him a variety of inducements, including a senior position, but Chandrasekaran has rebuffed the blandishments, choosing to field his still fledging party against the well organised CWC.

As for the Sri Lankan Tamil parties they have decided not to align themselves with either of the two major parties. President Dingiri Banda Wijetunge's analogy about the vine and the tree, the minorities being the vine and the majority Sinhala the tree, under which the minorities must seek shelter has cut deep into the Tamil psyche. They have decided not to wrap themselves around any tree.

But their tragedy is that deeply fragmented, most of them are going their own separate ways. And the Tamil vote therefore is going to be split among ex-militants and moderates.

While defections have become the name of the island's electoral game making for strange bedfellows, what has become increasingly evident is that a strong anti-government wind is blowing right across the country. The ruling UNP's 17 year rule has been unprecedented. So the message is loud and clear, '17 years has been too long, so out you go'.

NEWS REVIEW

CHANDRIKA PROMISES LTTE UNCONDITIONAL TALKS

The reports following the recent visit to Jaffna of Wasantha Raja, the producer and presenter of the BBC's Sinhala Service, 'Sandeshaya,' have created great interest within the Tamil speaking community as to the desire on the part of the People's Alliance and in particular Chandrika Kumaranatunga to settle the protracted ethnic conflict.

Before setting off to Jaffna, Wasantha had met Chandrika in Colombo through whom she is reported to have sent a message to the LTTE leadership. It is learnt that the message was to the effect that, 'I am prepared to invite the LTTE for unconditional talks. I am willing to expand the northern province to include Tamil areas in the east and make a single unit. I will redefine the eastern province and devolve more power'.

Chandrika's message as conveyed to the Tigers in Jaffna received wide publicity in the newspapers in Jaffna. Though Wasantha made a request to see and speak to the LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran, he could not. However, he met LTTE spokesman, Anton Balasingham who reportedly responded by saying that they did not trust the government or the parliamentary opposition, and they had lost faith in the constitutional politics of the south of the island. But they were willing to have a dialogue with the government or the opposition.

The following is the translation of what, according to the Tamil newspaper *Uthayan* published in Jaffna, Wasantha Raja said about his discussions with Chandrika:

'When I met Chandrika in her office, D.M. Jayaratne who is the General Secretary of the PA was also present. I asked them: 'I am going to Jaffna. What am I to tell the Liberation Tigers? Are you prepared to talk to them unconditionally? Chandrika replied firmly as follows: 'Yes. We are prepared for that. Tell them that. We will speak to the Tigers once we come to power.

'The present provincial council system is useless. We will dissolve all the provincial councils along with that system of rule. The word 'federal' has been abused in the past. Therefore we will avoid that word and implement devolution in a meaningful manner. The country can be divided into five units of devolution, and wide powers can be granted to them. It will be possible to find a solution to the ethnic problem by bringing the north and the Tamil areas of the east under one unit and giving it the necessary powers', Chandrika told me (Wasantha Raja).

'If the Tigers announce that they accept Chandrika's invitation, talks can begin now itself between both sides. And through that the Tigers can deal a proper blow to the Sri Lankan government.

'The Tamils and the Sinhalese desire that a solution should be found to the problem in the country. The Sinhala people desire that for this purpose talks should be held with the Tamils – the Liberation Tigers. But the government continues to avoid it. Therefore the Tigers and the opposition can get together and talk, leaving the ruling UNP out. The present international experience and arrangements show that problems in any country can be solved through discussions. We must understand this and act', Wasantha Raja said.

★ EXPLOSIVES AND WEAPONS FIND IN COLOMBO

Security in Colombo was tightened with overt and covert operations, including widespread arrest of young Tamils, being launched by the police and security forces following the discovery on 23 June of a 300 kilogram cache of explosives in a house at Dehiwela, cache arms and explosives in two 'safe houses' on 25 and 27 June respectively at Hunupitiya and at Padliyatuduwa in Wattala just a few miles north of Colombo.

The discovery of the explosives at Dehiwela followed an incident on the same day during which a suspicious vehicle with four passengers – two males and two females – travelling along Galle Road in Colombo was stopped and subjected to a routine search at a security checkpoint. In the course of the search and questioning as to their identity, one of the male passengers had consumed a cyanide capsule who on admission to the hospital was found dead. At the subsequently held post-mortem examination by the Colombo Judicial medical officer, the dead man was identified as 22-year-old Dharmalingam Sasidaran. Another person named Parameswaran who also attempted to commit suicide is now in hospital under heavy security.

Interrogation of the other passengers reportedly led the security forces to visit a house at Dehiwela where they found the explosives and also led to the arrest of three more persons including two females. Police sources said that the arrested persons had been registered with the police (as all persons arriving and residing in Colombo had to do) by an unsuspecting house owner who had rented out his house at Dehiwela to them for a monthly rent of Rs.5,000. The group members had claimed that they were staying in Colombo till they got their travel documents formalised to go abroad.

Information obtained from those arrested led to another discovery two days later on 25 June of a cache of explosives weaponry from a 'safe house' at Hunupitya just a few miles north of Colombo. The second find by the police Crime Detection Bureau included an AK-47 automatic rifle, a T-56 assault rifle, 9 hand grenades, 200 rounds of ammunition, batteries, switches, wire and devices needed to trigger explosions, two cellular phones and some explosives. The owner of the house, which had been allegedly used as an operational office, was taken into custody.

In the third find on 27 June in a house in Wattala, the cache of arms was buried in the compound of the rented house occupied by five suspects including females who were taken into custody. The cache included special battery packs used to trigger explosions, 8 hand grenades, 365 rounds of T-56 rifle ammunition, 95 rounds of 9mm ammunition, T-56 and 9mm pistol magazines, detonators remote control equipment and 8 cyanide capsules.

Police statements promptly ventured to suggest on the basis of alleged confessions by the arrested persons that they were part of a bigger suicide hit squad of Black Tigers that had been deployed to target important personalities and military installations including the Air Force Headquarters in Colombo. Claiming a connection between the discovery of the explosives at Dehiwela and the weapons from Hunupitiya and Wattala to the bombing of four hotels in Colombo in April this year, police sources said that as many as 15 suspected members of

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

the hit squad were already in custody, and they have mounted a hunt for the rest numbering between 12 and 15.

On 30 June, police found an Elf-van packed with 350 kg of high grade explosives ready to be detonated in a car park in Kotahena, Colombo. According to police sources, the explosives were packed in 13 metal boxes with millions of ball bearings and were well concealed and camouflaged between the rear and side panels of the van. It could have been set off by either a timing device or with a switch by the driver or a passenger.

Detectives from the Crime Detection Bureau located the bomb-vehicle following questioning of a 52-year-old resident of Wattala, who described a 26-year old person named 'Thaya' as the current custodian of a vehicle bomb. Parameshwaran alias Thaya had already been arrested in connection with an earlier incident. He had attempted to kill himself by chewing on a cyanide pellet, but was prevented by police officers. Parameshwaran, questioned after the lead given by the Wattala resident, directed detectives to an innocuous parking place in a temple compound, where he had left the white Isuzu van. He told detectives that he was awaiting orders regarding the target of vehicle-bomb.

★ BISHOPS BAN PRIEST'S BOOK

The Catholic Bishops of Sri Lanka have warned their flock against reading the controversial book titled 'Mary and Human Liberation' written by the outspoken Fr. Tissa Balasuriya.

In a statement issued on behalf of the Catholic Bishops Conference, its Secretary General Bishop Oswald Gomes said that the contents of Fr. Balasuriya's book could be detrimental to the faith of the Catholics.

'The author has made an attempt to give a fresh interpretation to Jesus and Mary. It is obvious that he had cherished the hope of making these sublime figures more acceptable in our milieu – a milieu that is multi-religious in character and scarred by social injustices.

'As responsible pastors, we have sadly to state that the presentation is not compatible with the Faith of the Church. The book as we have today contains serious deficiencies which can cause positive harm to the faith of our people', the statement said.

In the statement the Bishops have outlined what they consider to be four 'glaring errors' in Fr. Balasuriya's book. They say that the priest has portrayed sacred tradition based Holy Scriptures as 'an unwarranted creation of some self-interested church-men'.

There has been strong reaction from certain sections of the laity including some church theologians against what they describe as an attack on the freedom of expression by the Bishops. Fr. Balasuriya was entitled to his opinion as much as the Bishops who also had a right to express their own views on the subject of the book; instead of 'banning' the book the Bishops could have advised the Catholics to regard the contents of the book as containing the personal opinion of Fr. Balasuriya, said one priest who did not want to be identified.

★ US DIPLOMAT REFUSED ACCESS TO JAFFNA

The government recently declined permission to the US embassy in Colombo to send one of its diplomatic staff to visit the Jaffna peninsula in northern Sri Lanka. The visit, according to embassy officials, might have included discussions with LTTE leadership which control the peninsula.

The U.S. Ambassador had written to the State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. John Amaratunga at the end of May seeking clearance for the visit from the foreign ministry. Following up the letter, the US Ambassador had also discussed the matter with the Prime Minister and the Defence Secretary.

The government declined the US embassy request on the ground that it would not be opportune for the diplomat to undertake the visit to Jaffna in view of the prevailing situation there. However, sources close to the Foreign Ministry state that the government's refusal of the request was in accord with its practice of not granting permission to members of the foreign diplomatic corps to visit the north. As an example they point to a similar refusal last year of a request from the Australian High Commission in Colombo for one of its officials to visit Jaffna. The only exception made to the government's practice was in the case of a Norwegian diplomat who had sought and obtained permission to visit Jaffna in his capacity as the head of a Norwegian N.G.O.

Granting permission to the US diplomat to visit Jaffna would have meant setting a precedent entailing regular and direct contacts between officials from western embassies and missions and the LTTE which the government did not approve and therefore would not want to encourage,

★ BUDDHIST CONGRESS COMPLAINS AGAINST NOISY MOSQUES

The All Ceylon Buddhist Congress wants the government to prohibit the use of loudspeakers in mosques islandwide. In a statement released to the press and sent to President Wijetunga, the ACBC points out that the use of noisy loudspeakers for prayers in mosques undermines and disturbs the Buddhist cultural environment in both urban and rural areas.

The statement adds that the sounds of Islam heard five times a day over loudspeakers tend to make Buddhists believe that Sri Lanka is no more a Buddhist country and produce psychologically devastating effects on non-Muslims.

The ACBC has asked the government not to establish or maintain any religious schools and abandon the current state policy of establishing separate schools for Muslim students under the designation of Muslim Vidyaalaya and Muslim Maha Vidyalaya.

The ACBC also calls upon the government, in the light of recent developments and having observed with dismay the rapid growth of activities directed towards undermining Buddhism in Sri Lanka, to:

(a) enact legislation so as to ensure that Buddhism truly occupies the foremost place among religions and the Buddha Sasana is well protected and fostered in the country, and

(b) amend the Constitution by placing qualification on the freedom granted to every Citizen to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. The amendment should require that any such religious manifestation should be carried out in peace and harmony with Buddhism, and such conduct should not cause hurt to the moral sensitivities of Buddhists.

Elections – The Main Issues

by Jehan Perera

Eleven years is not a lot less than 17 years for voters who look for change. The UNP successfully overcame this natural desire for a change in government in 1988. The reason was twofold. First, in Ranasinghe Premadasa it had an unique and overpowering personality. Second, the UNP promised to become a new party with an exciting new programme under his leadership.

Today, on the contrary, the UNP appears to have neither. If it has exhausted itself internally, then it needs to start looking even outside itself if it is to salvage the forthcoming elections. It needs to keep alive the memory that led by J.R. Jayewardene in 1977 and Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1988, it was the party with new ideas that gripped the imagination of the nation and pulled in the votes.

How unpromising then that today the UNP should stand accused of copying wholesale from the SLFP's draft policy statements and brazenly passing them off as part of its own deliberations. Of course, it is not impossible that one of the SLFP MPs who crossed over might have submitted the SLFP's draft policy statements as his own.

But the UNP's denials that it had copied the SLFP's policy statements would have carried more weight if its Manifesto Committee had, at least, changed the style of Prof. G.L. Peiris's language in what they took.

The startling similarity, word for word and sentence for sentence between the two documents is indicative of how creatively dead, in the true sense, the ruling party has become after 17 long years in office. Bereft of new ideas of excellent governance, it looks as if it needs some help.

There were many better ways the UNP could have justified its conduct instead of making unconvincing denials. After all, ideas are nobody's monopoly. For instance, they might have pointed out that at least some of the ideas contained in the SLFP's policy statement on constitutional reform were those discussed, and written up, over the past several years at seminars held by the Council of Liberal Democracy, whose driving force was, and remains, the little appreciated and very hardworking Dr. Chanaka Amaratunge.

Different people contributed to the evolution of the ideas that Prof. Peiris, with his comprehensive intellectual apparatus, brought together in a new form and with unmistakable style in the SLFP's policy documents. There would have been no problem if the UNP had utilised those same ideas giving credit where credit was due. In American universities the worst crime is plagiarism, taking from others without giving credit to the source.

Unfortunately, the UNP appears to have been unable to see merit in this kind of morality. Instead it has responded in rhetorical style presumably based on the assumption that attack is the best form of defence.

The offer to Prof. Peiris of a Rs. 500 consolation prize if he can prove that he was the author of the proposals that came to the UNP via the 'general public' is nothing if not unbecoming in gentlemen who are currently vested with the grave responsibility of governing the country (or at least the larger part of it).

Solid thinking

What the SLFP has put forward in its policy statements appears to be solid, respectable and not very radical.

Everyone knows, and hardly anyone will dispute, that the reforms advocated by the SLFP (and arguably being discussed by the UNP) are necessary reforms. As a party that has been out of power for 17 years, and suffered immensely as a consequence, the SLFP has a certain credibility when it says that it wishes to implement these proposals.

Younger voters in particular are unlikely to be impressed by the UNP's repeated references to the '7-year curse' of 1970-77. On the contrary, they are more likely to be unimpressed by the UNP saying that it will implement those very same reforms, not having done so for 17 years.

The remaining basis of the UNP's strength is to offer more of the same. That way it might be able to retain its old support base. This is especially true in the economic sphere. The respectable performance of the economy during the 2-year JVP insurrection and its continued growth at a fairly rapid pace despite the northern war is the UNP's strongest point, and one which the middle class and business community would not wish to lose.

However the much publicised fear of the business community that the SLFP may roll back the gains of the open economy is unlikely to materialise. Coca Cola in the remotest villages is a reality. The fact is, the open economy has come to stay all over the world not just in Sri Lanka.

The main issue

At both the 1970 and 1977 general elections the direction of the economy was indeed the main issue. There were then two competing models to choose from. Today in 1994 there is only one. Whether its heart is in it or not, the SLFP will be stuck with the open economy.

Dr. Lal Jayawardena's forthright statement that the SLFP would not be opposed to private universities is indicative of present day realities. If private tutories can cater to high school children who desire to go to university, and those children, poor or rich, are willing to pay for that education, there is no reason why that same right should be denied to university education which is the very next level of education.

The main issue in 1994 is therefore not the fundamental direction of the economy and privatisation. There may be more state intervention in it or less, but there is

Continued on page 10

Continued on page 9

unlikely to be drastic change like there was in 1970 and 1977. The basic course has been set for the present.

Ethnic conflict

On the contrary, the main issue the country needs to face and overcome in 1994 and the years that follow, will be the ethnic conflict. That is where the real turning point is. That is also where the greatest brake on Sri Lanka's economic development is. An end to the war will almost surely double economic growth irrespective of whether there is more state intervention in the economy or not. More than Rs. 20 billion of the government budget is currently spent on defence, and billions more of foreign investment await peace.

People who are concerned about living in a country free of terror and terrorism, and also about bettering themselves economically, should vote for the party that is most likely to end the ethnic conflict.

Not only does that unresolved conflict lead to a waste of economic resources and development opportunities, it provides the government with the excuse to continue with the emergency which is the greatest source of nationwide human rights violations and state brutality.

Chandrika Kumaratunge's rise in the SLFP and her courageous words in favour of negotiated peace have caused a perceptible change in the atmosphere of inter-ethnic relations. Words are certainly not deeds, but with her ascendency the racist references to the minorities ceased from within her own party and also from the government.

If a negotiated peace is to be sealed in a constitutional compact, the undoubted genius of Prof. Peiris will be capable of overcoming many hurdles. The UNP will be hardpressed to overcome that promise. Much more needs to be done to educate the electorate about the different approaches to resolving the main issue facing the country than is being done at present.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Tamil Groups in a Scramble

The Tamil groups and parties which decided to participate in this general election will be contesting from electorates in the northeastern province and in the electoral district of Colombo. The Tamil parties that have entered the fray are the PLOTE, TELO and the EROS which have formed an alliance called the Tamil National United Front, the TULF, the EPRLF and the ACTC. The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress which came to an electoral understanding with the People's Alliance will, as a consequence of that understanding, contest only in the electoral districts of the northeastern province.

According to the agreement which was signed by the TELO, PLOTE and the EROS (Colombo) on July 1, the three groups will contest on the TELO slate in all three electoral districts of the eastern province; in the Vanni electoral district – comprising Vavuniya, Mannar and Mullaithivu – they will contest on the PLOTE list; and in Jaffna they will all be in the Independent group formed by the EROS.

The EROS was unable to contest as a recognised political party as a result of the Election Commissioner failing to respond positively to the organisation's last minute application to him seeking registration.

The TULF and the ACTC (Tamil Congress) reached an informal understanding on the eve of the elections after a long period of dogged acrimony according to which the TULF has provided three of its members to be included in the Independent group led by the ACTC leader Kumar Ponnambalam which has filed nominations in Colombo and has issued a statement to the press calling on the Tamils in the capital to vote for Kumar's group.

The EPRLF which declined all efforts by the other groups which formed the TNUF to woo it into their alliance on the ground that it was keenly exploring the possibility of forming a common front with the TULF, failed in its objective on the eve of the Parliament's dissolution and will therefore be contesting on its own in all the electoral districts of the northeastern province with the exception of the Ampara electoral district.

Douglas Devananda's EPDP kept its distance from all and sundry parleys and deals which marked the days following the dissolution of Parliament.

It was clear that Douglas Devananda was aiming at the 10 seats in the Jaffna electorate which are, given the fact only those few hapless voters living in the cleared areas of the Peninsula and the islands are in a position to vote there, all for his taking. However, the military authorities who were embarrassed by reports in the press that the whole exercise was going to be a farce stage-managed by them for the benefit of the EPDP and thereby for the UNP at the Presidential election, quickly took action to avert the problem by initiating behind the scene talks for returning all ten seats and ten candidates uncontested from a common list formed by all who were intending to contest in Jaffna. The UNP was also interested in the plan because it would have provided them with ten M.P.s in parliament who could play a crucial role in helping them form a coalition government if the P.A. were unable to secure a simple majority, viz – 113 seats. Furthermore, such an arrangement would have tremendously benefited the UNP at the Presidential polls which will be held in December. In return for sending ten M.P.s uncontested the UNP sought the assistance of the Tamils who were amenable to the plan to deliver the consolidated vote of the vast majority of Tamils who are not in a position today to come into army held territory in the north and cast their votes. Faced with the rapidly growing popularity of the P.A. under Chandrika's leadership the UNP could not let go the opportunity though it involved an unprecedented fraud. But the whole effort failed, as a result of squabbling among the Tamil groups over the allocation of seats. The EPDP which had been patiently biding its time for quite long bearing insults and political isolation, to emerge at this election as the Tamil group with the largest representation in Parliament, was not prepared to eat the humble pie. The EPRLF and TELO wanted more seats. However, all is not finished for the UNP. The case

filed by the TULF on Friday 8 in the Appeal Court challenging the validity of the holding of elections in the electoral district of Jaffna, if upheld by the supreme court can actually be a blessing in disguise for the ruling party. How? If that election is deemed not valid then no party can form a government in the newly convened parliament, which would require that the former cabinet of ministers carry on the business of state until the matter is constitutionally resolved. But such an eventuality could be nothing but a constitutional crisis because Sri Lanka's Constitution which was framed in 1978 does not envisage and therefore provide for a special situation in which a part of the country cannot be made with a specifiable period to participate in the electoral process. Most legal experts in Colombo are of the opinion that the TULF has a strong case while some of them harbour the apprehension that if the court were to uphold the case it will more than anything else strengthen the LTTE's claim to sovereignty over Jaffna at least. These considerations may not deter the UNP in its search for easy means and short cuts to victory – for staying in power is its priority.

Meanwhile in the electoral district of Vanni the TULF has fielded its leader Mr. M. Sivasithamparam despite the fact that the same principle on the ground of which it has challenged the poll in Jaffna, applies to the Vanni as well where more than half of the electorate's voters are, as much as their brethren in the Jaffna electoral district, not in a position to vote at this election. The PLOTE has considered Vavuniya its stronghold since the early eighties and has, since it re-established itself there in the latter part of 1990, 'invested' quite a lot of money on social service and rehabilitation programs. Hence the PLOTE after consulting with many former TULF workers on how best it could neutralize the real and potential influence of the Tamil moderates, whom it rightly feared on account of their solid reputation as formidable parliamentarians, decided to nominate Dharmalingam Sitharthan as its main candidate in the Vanni electorate. Sitharthan is currently the leader of the PLOTE and the President of its recognised political party – the Democratic People's Liberation Front. He is the only son of Mr. Dharmalingam M.P. for Manipay, who was allegedly shot dead by the TELO under instructions from the R.A.W. In earlier times Sitharthan was also an active member of the Federal Party, the predecessor to the TULF. This, the PLOTE appears to feel, might draw the traditional F.P. – TULF loyalists away from the powerful political personality of Mr. M. Sivasithamparam. Mr. Anandasangary formerly M.P. for Kilinochi is also contesting in Vavuniya on the TULF ticket. The EPRLF and the TELO have also fielded their leaders Suresh Premachandran and Selvam (Adaikalanathan) respectively, in this electorate which has six seats.

The situation in Trincomalee is, however, quite grim for the Tamils this time. At this general election they find themselves the smallest ethnic group in the electorate, after the Sinhalese and the Muslims. Thousands of Tamils have been displaced and thousands have fled from this district as a result of the War. The majority of them have been deliberately omitted from the electoral register compiled in 1993 (which will be the basis on which the general elections are going to be conducted next month). The government has meanwhile steadily and systematically increased the number of Sinhalese in the district by several hundred thousand, most of whom have been carefully registered as voters last year.

Under these circumstances as all Tamil politicians agree, it will be possible to return only one Tamil to parliament from the district even if all Tamils were to cast their votes in favour of one party. Yet, the same leaders are hell bent on wooing the Tamil voters there separately – each for his own group or party. The Tamil voting strength in Trinco which has already precariously dwindled may get further fragmented to the benefit of the Sinhala parties which are keen to wipe out Tamil political representation altogether from that vital district.

No one seems to have taken the predicament of the Tamils of Trinco to heart. And like adding insult to injury, an independent group led by Ram Rajakariar has also filed nominations along with the TNUF, TULF, and EPRLF. However it appears that realising the danger many Trinco Tamils might opt for just one party. The situation is, to say the least, worse in Ampara. The TULF candidate Mr. Mavai Senathirajah is the only politician of some standing among the Tamils in the fray. The U.N.P. which obtained the services of the S.T.F. which runs the district at the local government elections recently to compel Tamils living in areas under the outfit's direct jurisdiction to either vote for the U.N.P. or not vote at all. In areas where the UNP could not find candidates, the S.T.F. prevented the votes from going to any Tamil political party or group by fielding its own lackeys. Most Tamil leaders are sure that there will be a repeat performance of this fraud.

The overall strategy then is to reduce Tamil representation in Parliament and to ensure that the representation which may be possible this time is amenable to gross manipulation – the trend was set in the last Parliament. Srinivasan was a case in point. The conditions for achieving this unstated but desired objective are most conducive at the Parliamentary general elections 1994.

★ Rs.4 MILLION REWARD FOR WANTED MEN

Following the rejection by the government of the request by the daughter of former President Premadasa for the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry to probe his asassination, the Inspector General of Police has offered rewards totalling Rs.4 million for any information leading to the apprehension of six persons wanted in connection with their alleged part in the assassination.

Rs.1 million of the reward has been set apart for any information leading to the correct identification of the man presently known to be the assassin Kulaweerasingham Weerakumar alias Kumar alias Babu. The other wanted men, whose photographs have also been publicised, are Shanmuganathan Sivashankar alias Pottu Amman (reputedly known as the head of the LTTE's Intelligence Unit), Selliah Kailendran alias Indran, Markandu Selvarasa, Rajaguru, Karikalan and Sebanesan Newson alias Newton.

Meanwhile the former President's wife, Mrs. Hema Premadasa, speaking at the unveiling of a statue of the slain President, said that she firmly believed that some of those who were closely associated with her husband had a hand in his assassination.

Nathan & Chelva Solicitors

YOUR SATISFACTION IS OUR HAPPINESS

We offer you Prompt and Proper Service in all Legal Matters. Legal Aid Work also undertaken.

Partners: K. Chelva-Nayagam LLB, T. Sri Pathma Nathan, (Former Advocate of Sri Lanka), S. Veeravagu LLB.

169 Tooting High Street, London SW17 0SY

Tel: 081-672 1800 Fax: 081-672 0105

T.S.T. SKY TRAVEL

* **We offer you flights on scheduled airlines at a fair price**
* **We specialise in flights to Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Singapore, USA, Canada & Australia**
* *We will gladly refund the price difference if you can convince us that you could have got the same ticket cheaper elsewhere on the same date of purchase.*

Please contact Mr. S. Thiruchelvam

Office
255 Haydons Road,
Wimbledon
London SW19 8TY
Tel: 081-543 3318

Residence
69 Toynbee Road
Wimbledon
London SW20 8SH
Tel: 081-542 5140

FIMBRA

P.SRINIVASAN

1524 London Road
London SW16 4EU
Tel: 081-679 1952
Fax: 081-679 4960

Independent advice could save you thousands of pounds on your life assurance plan

Make sure you've got the right plan

Make sure you take independent advice.

HOME INSURANCE
BEFORE YOU RENEW OR TAKE OUT NEW INSURANCE

PLEASE CALL US FOR A COMPETITIVE QUOTATION
CONTENTS & BUILDING INSURANCE
BUILDING INSURANCE
It is no longer compulsory to do this with your Building Society / Lender.
PLEASE CONTACT
ARM ASSOCIATES
081-679 1952

SEATS AVAILABLE FOR JULY & AUGUST

When Skylink takes you to Colombo on Airlanka, we make sure you are really taken care of

Contact **Skylink** on
071-396 9944 (London)
041-204 1717 (Glasgow)
061-236 3114 (Manchester)
081-843 9995 (Southall)

For further details, please call

Indra Travel Centre Ltd
791 Romford Road
Manor Park
London E12 5AN
Tel: 081-478 6212

V & A Travel
175 High Street
Tooting
London SW17 OSZ
Tel: 081-767 7060

P S B Travel
345 London Road
Croydon CRO 3PA
Tel: 081-665 0206

V & A Travel
140 Hoe Street
Walthamstow
London E17
Tel: 081-509 9896

M G Travel
197 Ilford Lane
Ilford
Essex 1GI 2RU
Tel: 081-553 5483

Rubsy Travels & Tours
94 Priory Crescent
Southend On Sea
Essex SS2 6JZ
Tel: 0702 460 117

Sumit Travel Ltd
1466 London Road
Norbury
London SW16 4BU
Tel: 081-765 0033

Pan Travels
Unit 4, Beehive Centre
306-308 Green Street
London E13 9AP
Tel: 081-472 8758

ABC Travel
15 Kingston Road
South Wimbledon
London SW19 1JX
Tel: 081-542 1717

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Problems and Prospects if the Opposition Wins

by Dr. Nihal Jayawickrama

President Wijetunga's decision to dissolve Parliament and call a general election ahead of the presidential poll scheduled for December this year is likely to subject the 1978 Constitution to its severest test. While a UNP victory may give that Constitution an extended lease of life and that party and its members an unprecedented 23 years in public office, a victory for the People's Alliance will immediately demonstrate the inherent flaw in a constitution that was clearly not intended for all seasons but was made to measure by a government according to its own image.

Under the 1978 Constitution, the President is both Head of State and Head of Government. This means that he not only appoints the Prime Minister and other Ministers, but is himself the head of the Cabinet of Ministers and presides over it. The statement of government policy when he opens parliamentary sessions is prepared on his directions. In 1978, these constitutional provisions, together with others which barred defections and abolished by-elections were introduced to give President Jayewardene effective control, not only over his government but also over his phenomenal parliamentary majority and to ensure its continued existence. It was perhaps believed at the time that with strength would come stability and stability would, in turn, contribute to prosperity. What was omitted from that equation and obviously overlooked was that Sri Lanka was then, and would continued to be, a highly politicized heterogenous society. Unfortunately, that esential element of diversity was not taken into account. When, at one of the sessions of the parliamentary select committee that drafted the 1978 Constitution (which I attended as legal advisor to its SLFP members), I asked President Jayewardene what would happen, if the President belonged to one party and the parliamentary majority was drawn from the other, his response was that if he were the President in such an improbable situation, he would immediately transform himself into a constitutional head of state and act on advice. What he failed to appreciate then, was that his response was a concession to the essential contradiction in, and the patent fragility of, the system of government that he was seeking to establish.

On August 16, 1994 when the members of all the electoral districts have been declared elected, the present Cabinet of Ministers will cease to function. Thereupon, in the event of the People's Alliance being the largest political party in Parliament, President Wijetunga will be required to appoint as Prime Minister the member of that party most likely to command the confidence of Parliament. Thereafter, events could take a decidely bizarre turn.

President Wijetunga despite being the leader of the party that lost the general election, will be required by the Constitution to himself choose and appoint Ministers from the party that defeated his. He will be required to summon and preside over a Cabinet of Ministers who had secured a mandate from the country to reverse his policies, programmes and style of government. Assuming a Jekyll and Hyde posture, he may well have to preside over meetings of his own party as well, now the official parliamentary opposition. Finally, in an almost Gilbertian situation, he will be required to open the first session of the new parliament with a statement of policy which is either his own (in which event it will be immediately repudiated by a Parliament he is powerless to dissolve) or that of the new Cabinet of Ministers (in which event his credibility, his reputation and his political career would have been irretrievably destroyed). It is a certain recipe for disaster.

But a general election that is fairly conducted and freely contested has the capacity to cleanse our political system and reunite the diverse forces, that make up our country. At least, that was how life was in Sri Lanka in the first thirty years of independent rule. Therefore, an alternative scenario, a different vision, is also available. Article 37 of the Constitution enables the President if he is of the opinion that by reason of illness, absence from Sri Lanka or any other cause he will be unable to exercise, perform and discharge the powers, duties and functions of his office, to appoint the Prime Minister to exercise, perform and discharge those powers, duties and functions during any specified period. Although it was probably not intended for that purpose, Article 37 may well provide the key to a peaceful transfer of power, and the establishment of a stable government.

If President Wijetunga were to invoke Article 37 ('any other cause' being the defeat of his political party at the general election) and appoint the new Prime Minister to be Acting President, the latter would then be able to form his or her government, and open Parliament by making a statement of government policy that truly reflects the mandate provided by the people. One element of that mandate will surely be replacement of the executive presidency with a constitutional head of state to be nominated and endorsed by a method other than through an island-wide election. If the legislation required for that purpose is prepared and presented to Parliament forthwith, and receives the support of both government and opposition, President Wijetunga may well be able to resume his office – now stripped of its actual governmental responsibilities and serve out the remaining portion of the period for which he was originally appointed, i.e. until February 3, 1995.

A national constitution must be capable of serving not merely one political party or one ethnic, religious or linguistic group, but the country and its people as a whole. It must be sufficiently flexible to withstand the vicissitudes of history, and reasonably rigid to provide the stability to institutions of government as they bridge the gap from the present to the future.

Continued on page 21

Vasantha Raja, BBC Sinhala Service Reporter Reflects on Visit to War-torn Jaffna

My wife and I entered Tiger territory on June 14, from the LTTE checkpoint at Point Pedro, where the good-mannered officer issued us with a 'Visa-permit'. An old Morris Oxford, running on kerosene took us along the 20-mile stretch to Jaffna town. This cost us Rs.1500/-.

The bomb-damaged Subhas hotel was our base for the next ten days.

On the very first night, the LTTE'S PR man, Daya 'Master', visited us. He greeted us and asked if there were any places of interest we would like to see, so that he could arrange a tour for us.

I told him that more than anything else I would like to talk to the LTTE leaders, most of all to LTTE chief Vellupillai Prabhakaran himself. He politely said he would try his best and went off.

Daya Master, did not come back for a couple of days. My wife and I meanwhile just loafed around in the town and visited Hindu Kovils mingling with the ordinary people. Our inability to converse in Tamil proved to be a big disadvantage. But we met many who could speak in broken Sinhala.

To my amazement, I was visited by journalists from all Jaffna newspapers, *Udayan, Eela Nadam* and *Eela-Nadu* within the first two days of my stay.

I was interviewed at length. All of them wanted to know about the latest political developments in the South. They are keen listeners of the BBC including its Sinhala transmission Sandeshaya. I was surprised by the intimate knowledge they had about the subtleties of southern politics.

Before I started my Jaffna trip, I tried my best to meet President D.B. Wijetunga, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and Western Province Chief Minister Chandrika Kumaranatunga, so that I would have a clear idea about their approach to the north-east crisis. The President and the Prime Minister were too busy but I managed to meet Ms. Kumaranatunga briefly. So I was able to tell the Jaffna journalists about her position on the Tamil issue.

Chandrika would be willing to have unconditional talks with the LTTE; and she wants to reduce the nine provinces to five, expanding the Northern Province to include the Tamil areas in the East, thus creating a single unit, to which power would be devolved substantially to settle the Tamil problem, I told them.

Ms. Kumaranatunga's views appeared in the *Udayan* paper on the following morning as its lead story, thus giving the Tamils in the North some idea as to what her approach would be if she comes to power.

During my brief stay in Jaffna I met LTTE theoretician Anton Balasingham three times and discussed different aspects of the issue at length.

It was clear that they're determined not to give in to any attempt by the government to impose a solution on them by force, for Tamils' right to self-determination, I was told, is the cornerstone of their politics.

He told me that the LTTE is least bothered about the opinions of the Sinhala politicians as the Sinhala masses about the Tamil struggle, as long as they do not respect 'the Tamil nation's right to self-determination'.

But Mr. Balasingham kept on insisting that the doors are open for negotiations and it is up to the government or the opposition to make the next move. 'We can provide full protection to delegates who want to come over to Jaffna for talks,' he added.

I couldn't meet Mr. Prabahakaran. I was told he was away.

One of the most obvious factors I observed in the 'Tiger territory' was that 'organs of self-rule' are already in place. LTTE'S own police, its own system of courts, banks, postal network, etc. seem to be working reasonably well.

'In this new context, wouldn't it be in the interest of the LTTE to come to a compromise settlement with the government?' I asked.

Mr. Balasingham reiterated his previous statement that the doors were open for negotiations. 'After the sacrifices the Tamil youth have made, if we compromise now the people will put the gun on our heads too.' Mr. Balasingham said placing his index finger on his head.

When I asked him why the LTTE did not make a conscious effort to win the respect and support of the Sinhala people, who could become its best ally, he said the 'concept of Sinhala masses was an abstract sociological category'. I told him then: 'At a time when history is changing so rapidly, these abstract sociological categories can derive greater prominence than individual politicians on either side.'

He pointed out that they did have meetings with various 'left activists' in the '80s, including JVP leader Rohana Wijeweera. 'But', he added, 'most of these people, were merely paying lip-service to Tamil's right to self-determination.'

When I asked if there were any lessons to be learnt from the Palestinian and the South African experience, he said, 'the situation is different and the analogy doesn't tally'.

When my wife Lilani, and I were cycling around freely in Jaffna town we observed many things of significance. As the dawn breaks, hundreds of smartly dressed girls and boys, in their uniforms and ties, could be seen cycling to school. Shops are open and full of goods. Electricity, petrol and batteries seem to be the scarce items... that is as far as the ordinary people are concerned. The LTTE, the Press, the hospital etc., have found alternative methods of obtaining these.

In any case, the poor majority do not seem to be particularly bothered about such shortages. The impression I got was that ordinary people have evolved a remarkable resilience to the war. Day and night we could hear the sound of shelling in the areas close by. But we could see boys playing cricket without taking any notice of that. Religious and cultural activities also take place as if every thing is normal.

When I met top administrators in the Jaffna hospital the only complaint they made was the severe shortage of doctors and specialists. They made an emotional appeal to Sri Lankan doctors in the South and abroad to visit Jaffna, at least, for a few months stay, and serve the suffering patients. 'We have enough money to provide any visiting doctors with food and lodging during

their stay,' a female director of the hospital assured.

We met some people, particularly from the propertied and business classes who secretly expressed their displeasure of the Tigers. They keep praying for a quick settlement and blaming both the government and the LTTE for not taking enough efforts to reach a compromise. But one thing was crystal clear from the discussions I had with such layers: The majority of them would back the LTTE in any major military offensive in the North.

The lengthy discussions I had with Tamil intellectuals also gave me the same impression.

There now exists a young generation in the North, who has no experience of the South other than the continuous military economic blockade by an 'alien force'. They have no contact with the outside world, not even through the electronic media. This young generation, in some journalists' view, could pose the biggest obstacle to any compromise settlement.

Perhaps, the government's present strategy needs re-thinking for, the war efforts in the North have, up until now, only helped to alienate the Tamil community more and more from the South. Some would even think that the North has already passed 'the line of no-return'.

Yet, there is some ground for hope. Today there is a powerful drive for peace and unity internationally. This could eventually reflect among the masses both in the North and the South of Sri Lanka too. Therefore, perhaps, the right strategy might be to agree on a ceasefire and try to achieve a negotiated settlement on the basis of substantial devolution of power; and this could open up the doors to launch a massive drive to promote economic, trade and cultural links between the two communities which would be the surest way of making everybody realise that the unity is in the interest of all concerned. World trends, fortunately, are showing signs of leaning on the side of unity rather than division.

ETHNIC CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA

Negotiating a Moral Peace

by Ram Manikkalingam[1]

There is broader support, on a moral basis, for a just solution to the Sri Lankan conflict, than is commonly perceived. This disjuncture between perception and reality exists for two reasons. First reasonable differences over the requirements of justice are often conflated with deep ethnic cleavages leading to an underestimation of the moral support for a just solution. Second there is no institutional mechanism through which individuals and parties can express these reasonable differences on the ethno-national conflict outside of the vicissitudes of everyday politics. A careful re-examination of the different political positions espoused by Sri Lankans on the ethnic conflict – whether they appear to be for federalism or against it, for merger or against it, and for peace or for war – yields a much larger number of parties in favour of a just solution than is currently assumed.

Reasonable Differences

Reasonable differences over the requirements of justice, no less than deep cleavages over ethno-national identity, contribute to the continuation of violent conflict, these reasonable differences are often conflated with more fundamental ones and mask underlying moral support for a just solution. There are at least three critical sources of reasonable differences in Sri Lanka. The first is whether or not the solution to the conflict should entail granting autonomy to Tamil-majority regions along federal or quasi-federal lines. The second is whether or not the Northern and Eastern Provinces should be merged into a single unit. The third is whether a political settlement should follow a ceasefire or follow military action against either one of the two belligerents – the Tigers or the United National Party government. In a context of armed violence where one or more groups deny the rights of members of other ethnic communities to exist, these reasonable differences can contribute to the **continuation** of conflict.

Identifying sources of reasonable differences helps the pursuit of a just solution in two ways. It helps locate moral support where none was previously thought to exist. And it enables this support to be mobilised by indicating how negotiations can be structured to minimise the potential for reasonable differences to contribute to conflict. This section outlines how these reasonable differences contribute to conflict in Sri Lanka.

Federalism or Quasi-federalism?

Many groups and individuals support a political settlement based on the devolution of power to pre-dominantly Tamil regions, but disagree over whether devolution should be along federal or quasi-federal lines. This support can be discerned from the important shift in the political positions of many of the Sinhala-based and Tamil-based parties over the past decade.[2] In 1983 all the Tamil-based parties demanded secession and all the Sinhala-based parties rejected any devolution of power, while today many of the Tamil-based parties call for a federal devolution of power and the Sinhala-based ones agree to a quasi-federal one.[3] This is a crucial convergence in the political positions of key actors in Sri Lankan politics. Nevertheless this underlying agreement about the contours of a just solution is masked because disagreement over the most effective form of devolution persists.

This disagreement involves Tamil parties supporting a federal solution and Sinhala parties a quasi-federal one on the assumption that a federal solution will be of greater benefit to minorities. But this assumption is mistaken. For example it is possible that a quasi-federal solution with greater autonomy for cultural issues, such as language rights, and guaranteed minority membership in parliament or a specially constituted upper house, may actually give minorities considerable influence. This influence is likely to outweigh that gained by minorities in a constitutional arrangement based solely on federalism, where minority power at the center is diminished. Ultimately, the ability of minorities to influence the political process in Sri Lanka and preserve autonomous political/cultural spaces depends on the actual powers, laws and institutions of a new constitutional arrangement and not on whether the abstract form of such an arrangement is 'federal' or 'quasi-federal'.

I do not wish to add to the endless

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15

debate about whether a federal or quasi-federal solution is preferable for minorities in Sri Lanka or for Sri Lankan democracy. Instead, I want to emphasise that both arrangements – a federal as well as a quasi-federal one – are compatible with a secular democratic Sri Lanka where all citizens are treated as equals, and all ethnic communities are granted equal respect. Thus it is possible to agree on the moral basis of a just solution, while disagreeing about whether such a solution should be federal or quasi-federal. This reasonable difference has often been a source of contention, but it is one precisely because it underlies a basic agreement about the outlines of a just solution.[4]

Merger or De-merger?

The second source of reasonable difference is the divergent positions taken by the Tamil-based and the Sinhala-based political parties with regard to the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. It is reasonable for the Tamil-based parties to demand that the Northern and Eastern Provinces be merged as one contiguous unit, and it is also reasonable for the Sinhala-based parties to oppose such a merger.

The position of the Tamil-based parties is reasonable because a merged Northern and Eastern Province with special protection for the Sinhala and Muslim populations of this province is compatible with a just solution. This protection can be ensured through different measures, such as establishing 'Sinhala' and 'Muslim' regional councils within a merged North-East Province or allocating a minimum number of seats for minorities in the provincial assembly or empowering the central government to intervene when basic rights are violated by provincial governments. A solution based on the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces can take into consideration the legitimate aspirations of all three communities living in those two provinces.

Opposition to merger is also reasonable because regional autonomy exercised in two separate provincial councils can satisfy Tamil aspirations, as well as that of Muslims and Sinhalese of the Eastern Province. This is possible even without redemarcation of provinces or districts along ethnic lines. The concerns of Tamils in the Eastern Province with regard to a Sinhala-dominated centre include personal security, cultural autonomy (especially language rights), state-sponsored colonisation and greater decentralisation. All these concerns are equally shared by Muslims of the East vis-a-vis the centre. And since Tamils and Muslims together constitute about 70% of the population of the Eastern Province it is unlikely that Tamil and Muslim concerns in these areas will be over-ridden. Additionally since no one ethnic community alone forms a majority in the Eastern Province it is unlikely that a permanent majority that excludes other communities on an ethnic basis will ever form in the provincial assembly.

The debate over whether or not the Northern and Eastern Provinces should be merged into a single unit of devolution is intractable because both arrangements are compatible with a just solution.

War or Peace?

The third reasonable difference stems from uncertainty over who is responsible for the violation of ceasefires and the continuation of the armed conflict. This uncertainty can arise among those who agree on the moral basis of a just solution because of the paucity of information about the decision-making procedures of the main belligerents – the Tigers and the UNP government – or the ground circumstances in which confrontation occurs. The difference that emerges from this uncertainty can lead those who differ to advocate violence against the Tigers or the UNP government on grounds that are compatible with a just solution.

This political position – those who support a just resolution by military means – has been overlooked by most political observers of the Sri Lankan conflict. Generally, those who are for war – whether it is military action against the Tigers or against the Sri Lankan government – are thought to be hostile to a just resolution of the conflict. This is understandable, given that peace and justice usually go hand in hand, and it is difficult to view them as acting at cross-purposes. Nevertheless, it is possible to see how support for the very claims of justice (equality of individuals and equal respect for ethnic communities) – may lead many Sri Lankans to advocate military action against one or the other parties to the conflict.

For example, there are many reasonable people (Muslims, Sinhalese and Tamils) who support a military campaign against the Tigers because they believe that the Tigers are not interested in a political solution to the conflict. These reasonable people argue that flagrant violations of past ceasefires by the Tigers, their expulsions and massacres of thousands of Muslims, and their imprisonment of thousands of dissidents make continued belief in Tiger willingness to negotiate ludicrous. These opponents of the Tigers conclude that a viable negotiations process can only take place after the military defeat of the Tigers. The individuals and parties who subscribe to this position often espouse devolution to the North and the East, even with federalism. But they are adamant in their opposition to a cease-fire with the Tigers. This position in support of a military defeat of the Tigers must be distinguished from the Sinhala chauvinist position.

Similarly, there are many reasonable Sri Lankans (Muslims, Tamils and Sinhalese) who believe that the government has dilly-dallied on negotiating a solution to the ethnic conflict. They contend that successive Sri Lankan governments have succumbed to Sinhala chauvinist opposition and failed to implement every pact granting regional autonomy to the Tamils.[5] These critics believe this indicates that Sri Lankan governments are either controlled by, or lack the will to stand up to, influential elements of Sinhala chauvinism. They argue that if the Tigers are defeated militarily, the government will never grant an adequate package of devolution to the Tamils.

The individuals and organisations who espouse this position do not support an outright Tiger victory, instead they do not want the Tigers to be completely defeated by the government forces. Advocates of this position are not naive. They do not think the Tigers represent the genuine interests of the Tamils. On the contrary, this position that sees the Tigers as 'a last defence' is articulated by individuals who are aware of the brutality and excesses of the Tigers. This support for the Tigers must be distinguished from the Tamil chauvinist view that sees the Tigers as exemplary freedom fighters or the view that sees them as a natural response to Sinhala nationalism. Both of these positions are unreasonable and unacceptable as plausible bases of support for the Tigers. Nevertheless, given the failure of the Sri Lankan government to propose and implement an adequate package of devolution, the 'last defence argument' in support of the Tigers is not unreasonable.[6]

These two political positions on the ethnic conflict: qualified support of military action against the Tigers (anti-Tiger), or qualified support of military action against the government (anti-government), are clearly distinguishable from the Tamil or Sinhala chauvinist proponents of

war.[7] Their motivations for supporting military action, unlike those of the chauvinists – whether Sinhala or Tamil – are not incompatible with the moral basis of negotiations outlined above – individual equality and equal respect for ethnic communities. However, the subtlety of these two positions has been subsumed by a debate limited to two alternatives – war or peace. Generally, those who are for war are seen as chauvinists and those who are for peace are seen as moderates. But these categories are too simplistic and fail to capture a large segment of individuals and groups who may be amenable to a just solution to the ethno-national conflict.

The problem of disentangling these positions from the chauvinist ones is further compounded by the fact that in the heat of the war the anti-Tiger and the anti-government positions have been politically confused with either the Sinhala or the Tamil chauvinist ones. Only a very small minority holding the anti-Tiger and the anti-government positions have tried to maintain their distinctiveness. This is of course partly due to fear, but it is also due to the absence of a political or institutional vehicle that can give voice to the subtlety of this political position without distortion.

Tamils in the North and the East who do not endorse the Tamil chauvinist position are afraid to say so, even if they support the war solely on the basis of the anti-government position outlined above. In the South, supporters of the war against the Tigers who do not endorse the Sinhala chauvinist position have not distinguished their support for the war from that of the chauvinist one. **The irony of this situation is that anti-Tiger and anti-government positions outlined above are on opposite sides politically – despite the fact that they are ideologically closer to each other than to either the Sinhala or the Tamil chauvinist ones – because they both support a settlement based on equal respect for all ethnic communities.** Unlike reasonable differences over federalism and the merger, this source of reasonable difference directly contributes to the continuation of violence. It leads those who disagree to advocate armed action against either the Tigers or the UNP government.

While these three reasonable differences contribute to the continuation of conflict in Sri Lanka, such conflict does not imply opposition to a just solution which treats all individuals as equals and grants equal respect to all ethnic communities. Thus the framework of negotiations should be structured so as to give a stronger institutional voice to these nuanced political positions. This is essential in order to strengthen the political forces that support a just settlement to the ethnic conflict. What kind of a strategy for negotiations will allow Sri Lankans, whether they appear to be anti-Tiger or anti-government, to simultaneously disagree about immediate politics, while agreeing on the moral basis of a just solution?

(To be continued in next issue).

[1]The author is a doctoral candidate in political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

[2]For an instructive discussion on this shift and the differences between the Sinhala-based and Tamil-based parties or the desirable form of devolution during the parliamentary select committee proceedings on the ethnic conflict see Radhika Coomarasamy's 'The Select Committee Process. . . .' *The Sunday Times*, 5 Oct., '93.

[3]Even the Tigers who claim to be holding out for a separate Tamil state occasionally express a willingness to negotiate a federal solution to the conflict.

[4]One critique of federalism that is within the rubric of reasonable difference is H.L. de Silva's **An Appraisal of the Federal Alternative for Sri Lanka**, Dehiwela, 1991. De Silva raises three kinds of objections – political, legal and moral – to federalism in Sri Lanka. The political objection is that federalism in Sri Lanka may undermine the unity of the state by aggravating separatist tendencies. The legal objection is that instituting federalism will require a referendum in Sri Lanka. And the moral objection is that federalism should not be a concession to an armed group that has flouted accords. While most discussions of de Silva's essays have focused on the political and legal objections raised by him against federalism, his strongest objection – the moral one – has not been addressed (for example see Amita Shastri, **From Devolution to Federalism, Tamil Times**, *Tamil Times*, 15 January 1992).

De Silva's argument against the coercive use of military power to obtain political concessions is compatible with the moral basis of a just solution. But his conclusion that such a moral position militates against federalism in Sri Lanka is mistaken. It is possible to support federalism, while morally decrying the use of coercion to influence political agendas, irrespective of whether federalism is one such agenda. In short there are many people who support federalism on a moral basis and not as a concession to an armed organisation. Though de Silva's strongest objection to federalism is the moral one, the very moral value that de Silva upholds in this objection can also lead to support for federalism.

[5]These pacts include the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact of 1957, the Chelvanayakam-Senanayake pact of 1965 and the Indo-Lanka pact of 1987.

[6]'Not unreasonable' is simply an acknowledgement that many reasonable Sri Lankans hold the position that the Tigers are the 'last defence' of the Tamil People. For a discussion of the three different arguments in support of the Tamil Tigers see 'A Critique of Tigers' Claims,' *Tamil Times*, Oct. 1992 by Ram Manikkalingam.

[7]The terms anti-government and anti-Tiger have been used to describe these positions for want of better terms. To avoid confusion these terms need clarification for the purpose of this essay. The term anti-government instead of pro-Tiger is used so as not to confuse opposition to the government with chauvinist Tamil support for the Tigers. This position is not based on what the Tigers are doing, but rather on what the government is failing to do. Similarly, the term anti-Tiger instead of pro-government is used to distinguish opposition to the Tigers from chauvinist Sinhala support for the government. This position is based on opposition to the cruelty of the Tigers rather than positive support for the government program. It is also important to point out that there are Sinhalese who hold the anti-government position and Tamils who hold the anti-Tiger position.

Tuition

Tuition in Business Studies, Accountancy and related subjec for examinations leading to GCSE, A/L and beyond.

Tel: (Mercury) 0956 555587
Preferably in the evenings.

TAMIL TIMES

Annual Subscription Rates
UK/India/Sri Lanka: £15.00/US$25.00
Australia: Aus.$45
Canada: Can.$40
USA: US$35
All other countries: £20.00/US$35.00

Please complete this form and post to

TAMIL TIMES Ltd., PO Box 121
Sutton, Surrey SM1 3TD

deleting whichever is inapplicable.

I wish to pay/renew my subscription for one year/two years/three years

I am sending you a gift subscription on behalf of:

.....

.....

Please send an introductory copy to:

.....

.....

I enclose a donation of .....

My cheque/draft/M.O. in favour of Tamil Times Ltd is to the total value of .....

Name .....
(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Address .....

.....

Post Code ..... Tel.No. .....

'How I Became a Freedom Fighter' – V. Prabhakaran

In a special interview given to 'VELICHAM', a Tamil language literary magazine published in Jaffna, the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Velupillai Prabhakaran, reflected on the events and circumstances during his early life that inspired him to take up arms and join the liberation struggle.

Q. *From your boyhood you have been a voracious reader. Can you tell us something about the books which instilled Tamil nationalism in you and impelled you to take up arms against oppression?*

A. From my young days, I have been a lover of books. A good part of my youth I spent reading worthwhile books. I was especially keen on reading historical novels, works of history, and biographies of heroes. The pocket money that my parents gave me I spent on books. I got a lot of satisfaction and pleasure in reading new books. There was a bookshop in my village. It became my habit somehow or other to buy all those valuable books there and read them. It is through books that I learnt of the heroic exploits of Alexander and Napoleon. It is through my habit of reading that I developed a deep attachment to the Indian Freedom struggle and martyrs like Subhas Chandra Bose, Bagat Singh and Balagengadhara Tilak. It was the reading of such books that laid the foundation for my life as a revolutionary. The Indian Freedom struggle stirred the depths of my being and roused in me a feeling of indignation against foreign oppression and domination.

The racial riots that erupted in Sri Lanka in 1953 and the agonies that the Tamils had to endure as a result were the factors that impelled me to militancy. The reports that appeared in the dailies unleashed a hurricane of fury in me. When I read the novels of Tamil Nadu writers like Kausiyan (Paminip Pavai), Sandilyan (Kadat Pura) and Kalki (Ponniyin Selvan), I learned how our forefathers had established and ruled over great, flourishing empires. These novels roused in me the desire to see our nation rise again from servitude and that our people should live a life of dignity and freedom in their liberated homeland.

Why shouldn't we take up arms to fight those who have enslaved us: this was the idea that these novels implanted in my mind. In my boyhood I avidly read epics like the Mahabharata and the Ramayana; they too sparked off thoughts in me. 'Perform your duty without regard to the fruits of action', says the Bhagavad Gita. I grasped this profound truth when I read the Mahabharata. When I read the great didactic works, they impressed on me the need to lead a good, disciplined life and roused in me the desire to be of service to the community.

Above all, Subhas Chandra Bose's life was a beacon to me, lighting up the path I should follow. His disciplined life and his total commitment and dedication to the cause of his country's freedom deeply impressed me and served as my guiding light. I was never in the habit of reading cursorily, skimming through a book. I cultivated the habit of immersing myself totally in the book I was reading and becoming one with it. After I had finished reading a book, the questions 'Why?' 'What for?', 'How did this happen this way?', used to rise in my mind. I would try to connect the narrative and the characters with our life and the life of our people. At all such times, the thought that I should fight for the liberation of my people would dominate my mind. Apart from historical novels and works of history, I also loved to read science-oriented books and magazines like 'Kalaikathir'. I deeply desired that my people should develop scientifically and intellectually. Reading widened my horizons. I wanted to achieve something through action rather than waste time in idle fancies. I believed that what our Tamil people needed in future was action. The books that I read dealing with national liberation struggles conveyed one clear message to me: 'A freedom fighter should be pure, selfless and ready to sacrifice himself for the people'. So I would say that the various books I read impelled me to struggle for the freedom of my people.

Q. *Your childhood must have been totally different from that of today's generation. Can you describe your childhood?*

A. As a child, I was the pet and the darling of the family. Therefore I was hedged in by a lot of restrictions at home. My play-mates were the neighbours' children. My 'world' was confined to my house and the neighbours' houses. My childhood was spent in the small circle of a lonely, quiet house.

When I was studying in the 8th standard, there was an institution called the 'Valvai Educational Institute' functioning in my village, Valvettiturai. Some youngsters who had had a higher education, wanted to develop our village; inspired by this ideal, they were running this Institute at Sivaguru Vidyasalai (also known as Aladi School) close to my house.

One of the services rendered by this Institute was the provision of tuition at nights to students studying in the lower classes. Mr. Vernugopal, a Tamil teacher from my village, used to din into our ears that the Tamils should take up arms. He was an ardent supporter of the Federal Party's Youth Front; later, feeling that the Party was not militant enough, he teamed up with Mr. V. Navaratnam and was one of the founders of the 'Suyadchi Kazhagam' (Self-Rule Party). It is he who impressed on me the need for armed struggle and persuaded me to put my trust in it. My village used to face military repression daily. Hence even as a child I grew to detest the Army. This hatred of military repression, combined with Mr. Vernugopal's persuasive stress on armed struggle and the thirst for liberation generated an inner dynamism within me and friends of my age flocked behind Mr. Vernugopal.

The swelling thirst for freedom led me, when I was a fourteen year school boy and seven like-minded youngsters at our school, to form a movement with no name. Our aim was to struggle for freedom and to attack the army. I was the leader of the movement. At the time the idea that dominated our minds was somehow to buy a weapon and to make a bomb. Every week the others would give me 25 cents they had saved from their pocket money. I maintained this pool of savings till we had accumulated Rs.40/-. At this time we learnt that a 'Chandiyan' (thug) in the neighbouring village had a revolver which he was pre-

pared to sell for Rs.150/-. Determined to buy this revolver somehow, I sold a ring which had been presented to me during my sister's wedding. It fetched Rs.70/-. Altogether we now had Rs.110/-. We had then to abandon our plan to buy this revolver as we couldn't find the balance money. This is how I spent my youth, filled with thoughts about strugggle, freedom and the urge to do something for our people. Did I say spent? I think it's more appropriate to say I grew up as a youth filled with these thoughts.

When I was a student, others of my age used to indulge in games and pastimes. I spent my time trying to make bombs with whatever materials were at hand and trying to explode them. One thing I can say definitely: at the age of 14 the urge to fight, to carry out a struggle possessed me; in that respect my life was different from that of other youths of my age and my generation.

Q. *What do you think is the role art and literature should play in our country in the context of today's liberation struggle?*

A. Art and literature should portray the life and struggle of our people. It should reflect the present conjuncture. It should register the contemporary historical trend.

Art and literature take life as their theme. They deal with the vicissitudes of life; they symbolise the experience of life. Today our life and experience are intertwined with our struggle for liberation. It is this existential situation of struggle which determines our life today. Hence our art and literature should depict the characteristics of such a life of struggle; they should bear witness to the deep scars born of this life of struggle and convey the various currents of emotion generated in the course of struggle. At the same time art and literature attain heights of excellence when they give birth to a consciousness of freedom, that priceless thing. Only those creations which emphasise human values and have the uplifting of humanity as their goal can be considered great. I firmly believe that the literary resurgence emerging from the Tamil Eelam liberation struggle will produce great works which touch the summits of excellence in the future.

Q. *One can observe our young fighters turning into creative writers. They write about today's struggle and life on the battle-front. What is your opinion of this new trend which is enriching the literature of struggle and war?*

A. Literature depicting our struggle is developing in Tamil Eelam, several of our young militants show a keen interest in creative literature. One can observe that some of these writings and works of art are of high quality. This is a good sign. With the passage of time, the accumulation of experience and the growth of maturity, one can look forward to excellent literary and artistic work being produced by our liberation fighters. Our fighters have today become historic personages and are impelling history forward. When such people come to record the history of their time, it is bound to be authentic and sublime.

In the history of the Tamils, our era is a significant one. I consider it a very important duty of today's creative writers to bring forth in art and literature the liberation struggle that is unfolding before our eyes today so that the next generation may be made aware of this momentous freedom struggle.

Our militant cadres, I am confident, will turn out to be excellent creative artists in the course of time as they are growing up with a profound awareness of what struggle is like, and the realities of life in the war front; this will certainly enrich their experience and hone their insight into life. That's why I keep on encouraging budding writers, artists and art lovers in our movement.

Q. *You are taking a very keen interest in the welfare of small children whose lives have been adversely affected by the ethnic war and are formulating and implementing several schemes for their welfare. What is the reason for your taking a special interest in the future of these children.*

A. I'm all afire to build up a nation; that is the life-ideal I have set for myself. The future generation is the foundation for the nation we hope to build. Therefore I consider bringing up the future generation and moulding its character and ideals as important as building up the nation. That is why I take so much interest in the future generation. My ambition is to mould a new generation of youth who will be the architects of our country's future. This new generation will be scientific-minded, patriotic, honest, decent, heroic and possessed of a sense of honour, self-respect and dignity.

We have taken the small boys and girls who have been affected by the war into our fond embrace and are nurturing them. I do not consider them orphans or children bereft of kith and kin. They are the children of our mother land and they are flowers which have blossomed on our soil. Just as we envisage our language and our soil as our Mother, I consider these as the children of the nation which is the Mother of us all. I consider it our paramount duty to educate these children and bring them up on the correct lines as the architects of the future of our nation. That is why I pay very special attention to them.

(*VELICHAM*, **April/May 1994**).

Continued from page 5

★ **Sellasamy Joins PA:** The long running saga of the dispute between Thondaman and Sellasamy has come to an end with the confirmation of the dismissal from the Ceylon Workers Congress of its former General Secretary S. Sellasamy and 8 other Central Provincial Council members by the CWC Working Committee.

During the dispute between cabinet minister and CWC boss Thondaman and President Wijetunga, Sellasamy who was also a State Minister, unwisely sided with the President. Later when Thondaman and the President made peace, it was obvious that Sellasamy's days were numbered. With the dissolution of parliament, his effort to get UNP nomination to contest the election was politely refused at the instigation of Thondaman. He submitted his resignation from the post of State Minister before he was sacked, and now Sellasamy has joined the Peoples Alliance and is contesting the elections under the PA ticket.

The vote of the plantation Tamils would play a crucial role in the outcome of the elections, and the CWC boss has almost a monopoly of the vote bank in that sector. By giving nomination to Sellasamy, the PA is hoping to wean away at least a section of the votes from the plantation Tamils.

The Exclusive Right to Write Eelam History

by Taraki

The foul assassination of S. Sabalingam at No. 3 Allee Paul Leautaud, Sarcelles, a quiet middle class neighbourhood in Paris on May Day is the first Tamil political murder in the west. And as such it has deeply perturbed the Tamil expatriate community in Europe and Canada. It has also no doubt added to the worries of many Tamils in Europe who are faced with the threat of forced and imminent repatriation, and who have always felt – despite the unruliness on the part of newly arrived youth – that the best way to make their stay in those climes permanent and profitable was to impress upon their host governments that they were a hardworking and peaceful lot.

But with the dastardly murder of Sabalingam it is only too clear that the bloody business of Eelam politics will permit them no peace of mind even in those distant climes where they have sought refuge. The Sabalingam I knew was a peaceful man. He helped refugees with their paper work, was an avid collector of books on Sri Lanka, and did whatever was possible in his own small way to encourage writers and poets here and abroad.

He was also a small time publisher. For which purpose he established a non-profit organisation called the Arts and Social Sciences of Eelam Academy which is generally known by its acronym ASSEAY (pronounced Aasia in Tamil). Sabalingam has thus far published seven books. Three of them are collections of poems by V.I.S. Jeyapalan, Cheran and Solaikili – the leading poets among the Tamils today (Solaikili is a Muslim from Kalmunai). Two books are by lesser known poets.

He published a history of Puttalam written by A.N.M. Shajahan recently. In 1991 he brought out an elegantly prepared collection of articles which I wrote to the Sunday Island. And since then he tried on several occasions to persuade me to write a well-documented and researched work on the origins and development of the Eelam movement. The weekly distractions caused unfailingly by the vicissitudes of Tamil politics and the Eelam War prevented me from obliging him. I heard later that he had set out to do it on his own. And now I find that his investigations into some of the dangerous recesses of the Eelam movement's early history has cost him his life. For Tamil politics to be their sole property, the Tigers know, the history of the Tamil liberation movement has also got to impeccably belong only to them. Sabalingam was the only political contemporary of Prabhaharan who ever attempted to put pen to paper. And he is dead.

The LTTE in Paris seems to have denied involvement in the killing according to one source in France. A pamphlet has been put out in Berlin condemning the murder and implying the LTTE's involvement in it. The anti-LTTE and non-LTTE sections of the Tamil expatriate community which have been in general retreat since President Wijetunga started harping on his refrain that there is no ethnic problem have now been stirred into action.

One influential group in London, I understand, has already begun preparing a memorandum calling on European governments to crack down on the LTTE, accusing the organisation of perpetrating the murder. The main reason for this backlash is that Sabalingam was one of the few expatriates in Europe who maintained a very wide network of connections with writers, intellectuals, social workers and journalists in Europe, Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu and North America; and in their eyes Sabalingam was an honest and earnest man who frequently got into debt in order to carry on with his work.

His associates in France attribute the murder to the Tigers for the following reason: He had written an article to 'Thayagam', a Tamil political weekly magazine published in Canada in which he questioned, among other matters, two incidents in the early phase of the Eelam movement in which Prabhaharan was involved. One was the arrest of Kuttimani and Thangathurai, and the other was the Neervely Bank robbery which was carried out during the brief period in which Prabhaharan was associated with the TELO. Now in the article he wrote to the February 12th issue of 'Thayagam' under his own name, Sabalingam, I understand, had questioned the conventional version of the two incidents and had indicated that he would soon bring the truth out. In other words he was accusing Prabhaharan of treachery in connection with the two incidents.

Kuttimani was arrested when he was about to embark on a smuggling boat to Tamil Nadu. Somebody, it was widely believed, had tipped off the authorities about the exact time and location of his escape. One version was that the boatman who had a particular reason to hate Kuttimani had done so to take revenge. The TELO insisted on this version particularly after he was mercilessly massacred by the Tigers in 1986. But no one could say for sure, what had really happened and anyway Kuttimani had died many years earlier in the Welikade prison massacre.

The manner in which Sabalingam had questioned the Neervely bank robbery and the interpretation he appeared to give it thereby however came as a surprise. When the original LTTE split in 1979 Prabhaharan who was left with very little resources and friends joined the TELO which was then under Thangathurai and Kuttimani and worked with them for a while. It was during this period that he took part along with them in the Neervely bank robbery in Jaffna. Oberoi Thevan who later started the Tamil Eelam Liberation Army was also associated with this robbery. Now Sabalingam had pointed out in his 'Thayagam' article that all who participated in the Neervely heist are dead – killed either by government forces or by the LTTE as in the case of Oberoi Thevan. So by implication Sabalingam was saying that Prabhaharan had a vested interest in seeing all of them wiped out from the face of the earth.

The Neervely bank robbery is a blot in Prabhaharan's career in that, according to the constitution of the LTTE, any member who joins another organisation should be punished with death. He had killed some of his contemporaries precisely on that ground. And here we have Sabalingam saying that he was gathering evidence on such matters to write a comprehensive book!

But before we proceed any further a word about 'Thayagam', it is by far

the most consistently fierce anti-LTTE publication that has ever come out during the course of the two Eelam wars. (The army's psy-ops pundits[?] would look worse than kindergarten kids if any one were to judge their work by standards set by 'Thayagam' in its verbal blitzkriegs on the LTTE). It was published as a tabloid in Toronto for a couple of years and was forced to become a magazine in 1992 when the Tigers threatened many Tamil shops which were selling it and successfully crippled its circulation in favour of the rival Tamil tabloid Senthamari. 'Thayagam' is edited by a young Tamil writer from Jaffna now settled in Toronto called George Kruschev (his own name).

What has actually perplexed many is why has someone taken all this trouble and utter risk to kill poor Sabalingam when so many like Kruschev have taken it upon themselves to lambast the LTTE in every possible way and have remained hale and hearty unto this day? The reason I think which was of utmost concern to those who terminated him was that these things were ...g uttered by Sabalingam who was not just another enthusiastic critic of the LTTE's past but was one of the few surviving progenitors of the armed Eelam movement within which the young boy called Prabhaharan was moulded into a guerrilla.

Sabalingam was an associate of Sathiyaseelan who started the Tamil Manavar Peraval some time after the JVP rebellion was crushed in 1971. The movement was formed in reaction to the standardisation of university admissions under the SLFP regime at that time. It was the first Tamil youth group to advocate an armed insurrection no doubt inspired by the example of Rohana Wijeweera.

Prabhaharan joined one of Sathiyaseelan's underground cells as an 18-year-old boy in 1972. Sathiyaseelan, Poopathy, Sabalingam (who was an engineering student at Kattubedde at that time) and several others were arrested in March '73 by the police. The movement was almost busted at this juncture but Prabhaharan survived. While Sabalingam was jailed in the Anuradhapura New Prison, Chetti Thanabalasingam – with whom Prabhaharan started the Tamil New Tigers – Kannady Pathan and Rathnakumar who were also serving terms in the same prison made good their escape in a jail break. As a result of which Sabalingam and others were transferred to the Bogambara prison. And one day during his stay there he fell from the prison's second floor – an accident which permanently affected his left hand.

He was released from prison in February 1975. Later he got a job at the Paranthan salterns, and like many others slowly faded away from the scene despite a connection he had with the Eela Viduthalal Lyakkam which was started in '76 and in which Varatharaja Perumal was a prominent activist. Another member of this group was Pushparajah, who like Perumal later joined the EPRLF and was its representative in France for many years.

He was closely associated with Sabalingam's recent work which has led many people who are in a hurry to provide information to claim that Sabalingam was a member of the EPRLF. And one night while he was working at the saltern someone knocked at the door. It was one of the minor kids whom Sabalingam had known when he was involved with Sathiyaseelan's group in 1972. He was Prabhaharan – yet to make his name – and he was seeking refuge. Sabalingam kept him for many weeks in his quarters until it was safe for him to continue on his mission.

And today they say that the LTTE's hand is suspected in the murder. If that is the case then the message is quite precise to those living in the West today who were intimately involved with the nascent Eelam movement in the seventies, that its history will be narrated or represented according to the victor Prabhaharan.

This is of central importance to the ideological cohesion of the LTTE today, because a whole generation of suicidally loyal youth derives its ideological commitment from a history in which the armed Eelam liberation movement begins with Prabhaharan in 1972. The message may have been deemed necessary in view of the fact that many of Prabhaharan's senior contemporaries are living in Europe – who it is always possible could someday narrate a different story. Sathiyaseelan and short Bala (a founding member of the LTTE who saved Prabhaharan from arrest at Inuvil) live in Germany. Iyer a Jaffna Brahmin, who was the treasurer of the original LTTE is also quietly somewhere in Europe. Raghavan who was almost Prabha's equal in the organization until he fell out with him in 1985 lives in London with Nirmala Nithyanandan (the killing of Nirmala's sister Rajani is attributed by some to Raghavan's connection). But all have kept utterly quiet to this day.

Sabalingam was making arrangements to meet them one by one to gather the bits and pieces of the past with which he hoped to narrate another history.

It is ironic indeed that Sabalingam lived in a country where many decades ago the great Russian emigre Alexander Kojeve delivered his famous lectures on Hegel which 'dramatically shaped the French intellectual landscape of this century', and the essence of which was 'history will belong to, and shall be according, to those who have won with the force of arms' (Vincent Descombes calls it the terrorist interpretation of Hegel). Though Fukuyama has commercialised Kojeve's ideas to entertain the flippant intellectual fancies of the American mind, they remind us with cold blooded clarity that for Prabhaharan who considers himself the ultimate victor in the Eelam movement, its history must belong to him even if it were to cost many lives. That is central to his existence.

(Courtesy: *Sunday Island*, 8.5.94).

Continued from page 13

The 1946 Constitution of Ceylon served that purpose well for a quarter of a century. Neither the idealistically conceived but ideologically burdened 1972 Constitution, nor the more pragmatic but misconceived 1978 Constitution were equipped for that purpose. An opportunity is about to present itself for the country to get back on proper constitutional rails.

These are collective acts that require goodwill, sincerity and a fund of political maturity, all of which have been rapidly evaporating in the past decades. While the rest of South and South East Asia has not only been galloping towards economic prosperity but also achieving political stability Sri Lanka has remained singularly parochial in outlook.

The forthcoming general election may well be the turning point. It appears to have the potential for dramatic and exciting change.

Judge's Plea for Ahmadis

A top-ranking Canadian judge, who is a member of the International Tribunal of War Crimes in the former Yugoslavia has accused the Pakistani government of violating the basic rights of its 4-million-member Ahmadiyya community.

The judge, Jules Deschenes, said in a letter to the Canadian Foreign Minister, Andre Ouellet, that the 1974 amendment to the Pakistani constitution 'literally excommunicated the Ahmadiyyas and banished them from Islam.'

And an ordinance introduced into the Pakistani Penal code, the judge said, brands Ahmadiyyas 'as common law criminals, liable to fine and imprisonment.' Deschenes urged the Canadian minister to put strong pressure on the Pakistani government to repeal those provisions.

'A recent judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan has just brought into the limelight a cruel injustice which, for exactly 20 years, has been deeply hurting the convictions of all those throughout the world who believe in freedom and especially freedom of religion,' Justice Deschenes said.

In Pakistan, Deschenes asserted, 'the constitution and the Penal Code have made outlaws of Ahmadis. Pakistan has put them in the category of heretics. They forbid them, under pain of fine and imprisonment, from "posing" as Muslims or using expressions traditionally linked to Islam, as mosque, Muslim, leader of the believers, Mother of the believers, Kalima Tayaba; i.e., there is no other God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.'

'Typically,' the judge added, 'as in a society where state and religion are interacting, even merging into each other, religion enjoys the support of the secular arm and the Pakistani state takes over the task of banishing its four million Ahmadis, whom indeed the Supreme Court of Pakistan has itself described as "an insignificant minority".'

Deschenes, a judge from Quebec who is an expert in human rights issues, accused the Supreme Court of Pakistan of justifying indictments, jail sentences and fines against many Ahmadiyyas 'if not even encouraged by dismissing the eight appeals which had reached it from Baluchistan and Punjab.'

In each of the first five cases, an appellant 'had been arrested in a bazaar where he was wearing a badge of "Kalima Tayaba".'

In the three other appeals, Deschenes asserted that an 'injunction was granted prohibiting the Ahmadiyyas from celebrating the centenary of the foundation of their movement by "indulging in following activities: illuminations, gates processions, posters, pamphlets, distribution of sweets to children, service of food to most needy" and "any other activity directly or indirectly which may incite and injure the religious feelings of Muslims".'

Deschenes told Minister Ouellet that despite such violations of basic rights, Pakistan's constitution says it guarantees freedom of religion and protects the right of any citizen to profess and propagate his religion as well as the right of every religious denomination to establish and manage its own institutions, the Canadian judge has told Foreign Minister Ouellet.

BALA & ARI

Solicitors and Administrators of Oaths
We offer friendly legal service on

- Conveyancing (Sale and Purchase-houses, Flats Commercial property)
- Partnership agreement, Power of attorney, last wills etc.
- Immigration
- Divorce and Matrimonial
- Civil and Criminal Litigation
- Landlord and Tenant
- Employment

Legal Aid also available
Please Ring
B. Balaraman or S. Aravindan
Address: 416 Barking Road, East Ham, London E6 2SA
Telephone: 081-503 5034

IMMIGRATION SOLICITOR

Applications for:

★ Early Visas for those in the Home Office asylum backlog
★ Extended Stay/Permanent Residence
★ Visas for Elderly Parents, Wives, Visitors, Students
★ Citizenship ★ Also Appeals

Nearly 500 Tamil clients acted for up to now

A.J. PATERSON **Phone/Fax: Tony Paterson on 081-748 8532**

ALL CLASSES OF INSURANCE ARRANGED

★ Private and Commercial Motor Vehicles
★ Shops
★ Home Contents
★ Buildings
★ General

Mortgages arranged
First time buyers welcome

Contact

J. KULENDRAN
Beddington Insurance Services (Wimbledon) Ltd.

157A Hatfield Road,
Wimbledon,
London SW19 3TJ
Tel: 081-543 5181

96 Sudbury Avenue,
North Wembley,
Middlesex HA0 3BG
Tel: 081-904 9686

Secession, Nationalist Guerrilla Movements and Peace*

by Adrian Wijemanne

Part 1: SECESSION

1. The 'secession' mentioned in the title of this address is the secession from alien rule of a people who regard themselves as having a distinct identity and occupy a space or territory which too they regard as their own. Human history is replete with attempts at such secession on every continent and throughout the centuries. Edward Gibbon in his celebrated 'The History of the Decline and Fall of The Roman Empire' chronicles the struggles of the 'barbarian' tribes to throw off Roman rule. That, together with the corruption at the centre of that greatest of all empires, led to its decline and fall. So, secession has an ancient lineage and is not a newfangled thing. It is a natural feature of the human condition.

2. That secession should undermine empires which shackled together many disparate peoples is understandable. But it affected individual states as well where such states contained disparate peoples. The best example of this (and one which mercifully delivers you from the danger of being dragged through many centuries!) is this country itself. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was both an unitary state comprising the two main islands that make up the British Isles and also the mother country of a large empire. Secession undermined and finally broke up both the unitary state and the empire.

3. I wish to dwell on these two developments separately. The secession that broke up the mother country was that of the Irish people on the island of Ireland. The Irish people were ethnically different from those on the main island; for centuries they had been the principal occupants of the island of Ireland; they had a language and culture of their own uninfluenced by a long period of Roman occupation or rule; they had a different religion even though it was one of the three main traditions of the Christian family. In today's language one could say their distinctiveness was ethno-territorial, Linguo-cultural and religious. This may remind us of a similar distinctiveness with which we are all familiar nearer home.

4. Secession from the British empire also started very early – in the 18th century with the secession of the 13 colonies in North America which became the nucleus of the present-day United States. The process continued with the evolution of dominion status for the British populated colonies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand in the early years of this century. It was accelerated after the end of World War II by the tide of de-colonization which swept the colony of Ceylon too to independence with little effort and too little awareness of the consequences.

5. The secession of constituent nations affected not only the maritime empires such as the British but also the mainland empires of Europe – the Austro-Hungarian empire and the Ottoman empire. The seething nationalism that beset them was one of the factors that triggered the first world war. The peace of Versailles that ended the war dismembered these two empires and produced many new nation-states in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Near East.

6. Then, after the second world war secessions in the form of the de-colonization movement led to the break-up of the British, French, Dutch and Portuguese empires in Asia and Africa producing a host of newly-independent nations. The theory then was that the moral justification for secession was the right of self-determination for colonial states. The newly-independent states sought to draw the line at themselves, that is, the former colonies had the right to secession and its consequence, independence and sovereignty; but they denied that same right to the constituent nations within their states wherever such existed. This argument loses much of its force, however, in the light of the fact that the first wave of secession and independence was for the constituent nations of the mainland empires – the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman.

7. The tide of secession has swept away this feeble defence and, indeed, has swept everything before it. Secession has undermined and subdivided many newly-independent countries as well as the only remaining empire. The process has operated in, and continues in, Europe, Asia, Africa and North America. In our own lifetime we have seen secession splitting up the Soviet empire into a large number of separate, independent, sovereign states. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Cyprus have succumbed to secessionist movements and split up. The United Kingdom and Spain are wracked by wars of secession at the present time. It is the same in Asia – the newly-independent French and British colonies split up at independence itself or shortly thereafter by the secession of their constituent nations – French Indochina into three, the British Raj in India and the Malaysian Federation each into two. In Indonesia, the Philippines, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and India, wars of secession are in full swing. Pakistan split into two in 1971. In West Asia the state of Jordan is about to be riven by the secession of the Palestinian people.

8. In Africa there are many movements of secession from individual states. In Ethiopia a long war of secession ended last year with the establishment of the state of Eritrea. The Sudan and Morocco are beset by long-running wars of secession. the East African and Central African federations, constituted in the last years of British imperial rule, were undermined by the secession of their constituent nations producing six separate states – Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda from the former federation and Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi from the latter. Somalia has split into two and the northern part is free from the dreadful turmoil in the southern. The island of Zanzibar may soon break loose from Tanzania.

9. In North America the secession of Quebec from the Canadian federation is the foremost item in the political agenda of that state.

10. The secession of peoples who regard themselves as nations from

Continued on page 29

*A recent speech by Adrian Wijemanne, C.C.S. (1948-62), Mackwoods (1962-74), W.C.C (1974-85). Author of 'War & Peace in Post-Colonial Ceylon 1948-91', on the occasion of the Sixth Anniversary of the International Tamil Foundation, 12th June 1994.

Continued from page 23

states within which they have been included by the colonization process is a worldwide phenomenon. It is the dominant political trend in the history of 20th century Europe, Africa and Asia. It is a centrifugal force atomizing and multiplying states. It is a necessary pre-requisite to the centripetal force that brings such totally independent nations to sacrifice some of their sovereignty and join in Unions such as the Benelux Union and the Euroean Union. It is a great and sweeping trend in human history. To regard such a movement as an act of wickedness and bloody-midedness is an exceedingly primitive reaction betraying an ignorance of the great historical movements sweeping through nations and states at this time. Nor is it simply a reaction to misgovernment or discrimination. It is far more profound than that and for that reason cannot be dispelled by remedial measures which right perceived wrongs. Indeed, many new states which have come into being after successful secessionist movements have thrown up governments far worse than those of the countries from which they have seceded.

11. The proper understanding of such movements and the comprehending of their true import has proved extremely difficult in every theatre in which they have appeared. But over time attitudes and even legal acceptance have evolved. The United Kingdom is an excellent illustration of this. The first response to secessionist movements – in the island of Ireland and in the 13 North American colonies – was outright refusal and war in support of that refusal. The next stage was recognition that such wars could not be waged successfully and the consequent acceptance of secession. Thus the 13 colonies gained their independence and became a separate state; in 1922 the Irish Free State gained its independence and became a separate state which 5 years later broke its allegiance to the British monarchy, became a republic and seceded from the British Commonwealth and has refused to rejoin it even after it ceased to be the 'British' Commonwealth and became the Commonwealth of Nations. The Irish have very independent ideas indeed as to what 'independence' means to them.

12. Since these events the attitude of both governments of every political stripe and of the British people as to the secession of any of the four nations that constitute the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has evolved considerably. It is now universally accepted that if the majority of any of these nations votes for secession and separation into an independent state there would be no let or hindrance to such separation. Indeed, referenda have been held in Scotland and Wales to ascertain the wishes of the people living there as to secession. In both cases the majority voted against secession. In Northern Ireland the central issue of current politics is secession. The two Unionist parties which command a majority in the province as a whole are opposed to secession and it is that majority decision that the British government backs with armed support today.

13. The public attitude and government policy towards secession was the same in both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. If by majority vote a constituent nation within those states opted for secession it could do so. In both these countries there was a majority vote for secession and secession took place.

14. This change in attitude has gone further into the legal domain. The last constitution of the Soviet Union embodied the right to secession for its constituent republics which promptly availed themselves of that right and seceded. In the new constitution soon to be voted upon in Ethiopia the right to secession is entrenched for all the constituent nations of that country (bar one – the Oromo – who are scattered throughout the country and have no separate territory of traditional occupation).

15. On the other hand, in the two countries – India and Sri Lanka – in which attempts have been made legally to outlaw moves towards secession by amendments to their constitutions the futility of such a measure has been shown. In both countries it has not had the slightest effect and both are wracked by secessionist wars, India in three separate theatres simultaneously.

16. It is abundantly clear now that the secession of people who regard themselves as a nation and are currently included in a state with other nations is a matter which can be, and should be, dealt with by accommodation rather than by war. In the case of the British empire, because of Britain's experience in both North America and Ireland, the post-World War II decolonization process was accommodated peacefully without war. The case was the opposite in the French, Portuguese and Dutch empires as none of these metropolitan countries had the same experience as Britain of an unsuccessful defence against a secessionist movement. So, in all three of their cases the post-World War II de-colonization was forced by war. These wars were of a very particular kind – they were guerrilla wars of national aspiration. Which brings me to the second part of my address to you today.

NATIONALIST GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS

There is no better school in which to learn about nationalist guerrilla movements than this very country in which we now live – the United Kingdom – however unlikely that may seem at casual glance. The great-grandfather of all nationalist guerrilla movements arose in this country and finally broke it in two. The long war of Irish independence is one of the darkest chapters of British history. There is virtually a conspiracy among British historians in refusing to explore its full implications and in laying bare its great lessons. Those lessons, however, are very well known to British politicians and to the governing class in this country from which they are drawn. The central lesson is that a war waged by a conventional army against a force of nationalist guerrillas on the latter's home ground could never be won. The conventional army of the state could never be defeated by the guerrillas; equally, it could not exterminate or overwhelm and bring to surrender the nationalist guerrillas who opposed it. That lesson has sunk so deep into the psyche of British politicians of every stripe, including the battle-hardened Mr. Ashdown, that even today they shrink from an open conflict with Serb guerrillas in the mountain fastnesses of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

18. The guerrilla war of the Irish nationalists on their home ground on the island of Ireland lasted 300 years. For most of this period the Irish population comprised around 2 million souls. The population of mainland Britain in the last century of the conflict was around 45 million. During much of that period Britain was leading the first industrial revolution becoming the strongest in-

dustrial country of Europe and it was also the mother country of the largest empire of the time. The disparity between the two combatants in material resources and military strength was enormous. Every British government strained every nerve to stamp out the successive 'Irish Rebellions'. The military pressure was supplemented by a succession of political concessions devolving ever-increasing extents of 'Home Rule'. Neither the former nor the latter nor even the combination of the two was of any avail. The war continued – unwinnable and inescapable; there was only one way to peace – separation into two states. This was accomplished by the Treaty of 1922 entered into by the Lloyd George government. The mother country of the greatest empire on earth at that time was split in two. At long last the great travail was over and a peace was secured, imperfect though the arrangement was, that has lasted to this day. Separation ended war and ushered in peace – there **was** no other way.

19. And still our lessons from this country are not over. The nationalist guerrila war in Northern Ireland, now in its 26th year, re-inforces the lessons of the past. The British army in Northern Ireland and the Ulster Defence forces together field around 110 troops to each IRA guerrilla. The Royal Navy enforces a stringent *cordon sanitaire* around the coast of Northern Ireland. The Irish Republic supports the British government fully in patrolling the long land boundary between the two countries. Britain spends £8.9 million **per day** on the effort. There is, nevertheless, not a glimmer of hope that the IRA guerrillas can be wiped out by military action; on the contrary, there is much evidence that they are better trained, better led and better armed today than ever before. It is in that knowledge that military action is being supplemented by political measures. The IRA fights for the secession of the six counties and two county boroughs that make up Northern Ireland from the U.K. and their joinder to the Irish Republic so that the island of Ireland as a whole could be one single state. As mentioned earlier, the majority (by a small margin) of the population of Northern Ireland oppose secession. The IRA is supported covertly by a minority of the population but yet it has been able to continue their struggle for over 25 years. Willy-nilly Britain is embroiled in a costly war which it cannot win and cannot end. It plays no small part in Britain's relative decline *vis-a-vis* its comparable Western European partners – France, Germany and Italy – all of whom are at peace. When the Channel Tunnel is functioning in a few weeks time and travel to the continent becomes more common this disparity will be glaringly and painfully obvious.

20. Few countries would leap at the secession of themselves with greater alacrity than Britain if only a majority of the population of Northern Ireland would vote for secession.

21. The lesson of the British experience in Ireland, both past and present, is crystal clear. Neither military pressure nor political concessions nor even a combination of the two can extinguish an uprising by a nationalist guerrilla movement. Peace can be had only by separation. There is no other way.

22. Nationalist guerrilla movements emerge when a nation's decision to secede is opposed by the empire or state from which the secession is to take place. From the earliest of times the normal reaction to attempts at secession was opposition. This was natural as all the empires of the past regarded themselves as trustees of a civilizing mission. The Roman empire provided law and letters to tribal peoples; the Holy Roman empire purveyed the Judaeo-Christian morality; the Arab empire the numerals and basic sciences which have enriched the world. Departure from their ambit was nothing but barbarous and had to be opposed. Such rationalisations existed in the case of individual states as well as a ground for opposing secession from them. One with which we are familiar is the assertion that Buddhism in its purest form could not be preserved unless a single all-island state occupied the island of Ceylon.

23. Opposition to secession removes the matter from the domain of politics to the arena of military conflict. It is a very special kind of military conflict, quite different to that between two states equipped with conventional armies. A guerrilla war is a conflict between a conventional army on the one hand and a guerrilla force latent in the population on the other. Guerrillas who engage in such conflicts are of two quite distinct types having quite different objectives. One type is guerrillas of an ideological motivation who fight to overthrow the regime in power and seize state power themselves in order to change the policies and practices of government and even to transform society itself. The best examples of this type are the Russian communist guerrillas led by Lenin and Trotsky and the Chinese communist guerrilla forces led by Mao Ze Dong. A quite similar case are the communist guerrillas led by Fidel Castro. In all three of these examples the guerrillas succeeded in their objective. In many more cases, however, such guerrillas have failed and been overwhelmed by the conventional forces of the state. The Che Guevarists in Bolivia; the Tupac Amaru (Tupamaros) movement in Argentina; the guerrillas in El Salvador; the May 21st movement in Colombia; Sendero Luminoso in Peru; the Naxalites in India; the JVP in Sri Lanka; the NPA in the Philippines – have all failed to achieve their objective and have been suppressed by the conventional military forces of the state. In Nicaragua the Sandinistas won power and exercised it briefly only to be defeated at the polls on the return to normalcy.

24. The other, and fundamentally different, type of guerrillas are those of a nationalistic motivation seeking to secede from an empire or a state and to set up a separate, independent, sovereign state for their nation. It is this type of guerrilla movement that is referred to in the title of this address. They emerge in response to opposition to secession and they aim to secure secession by military means. It is such nationalist guerrilla movements that have brought down empires and subdivided states. On occasion they have aimed to unite divided countries and nations as in Viet Nam. Perhaps the best example of guerrillas of this type are the Irish nationalist guerrillas who first fought successfully to secure an independent state for their people and still fight on to unite their divided country. The Algerian and Indo-Chinese guerrillas broke up the French empire after World War II. The Indonesian nationalist guerrillas did likewise to the Dutch East Indies empire. Nationalist guerrillas in Angola and Mozambique overthrew the Portuguese empire in extremely bloody conflicts. In Zimbabwe the nationalist guerrillas led by Mugabe (ZANU) and Nkhomo (ZAPO) overthrew the white settler

Continued on page 26

READERS FORUM

SRI LANKA'S ELECTIONS AND THE TAMILS

1. TAMILS must not contest: Until we have a new constitution in place acceptable to the Tamils and guaranteeing absolute equality based on the essence of our Thimpu Principles it would only weaken the Tamil cause and throw us back into the old vicious circle, if Tamils vied for seats at any interim elections – General or Presidential. Any power or influence which might be seemingly obtained by Tamil and Muslim political parties through a few seats won at the forthcoming elections, for example, will prove to be merely divisive and destructive, prolonging the Tamils' and the Island's agonies. President Wijetunge, it would appear, has impulsively and unexpectedly chosen an uncertain road by dissolving Parliament and decreeing General Elections in August 1994. For a suitable constitutional structure which will effectively solve the Tamil ethnic problem and pave the way for the Island's social stability and *prima facie* unity, readers are referred to the author's PLAN FOR PEACE of April 1994.

2. Should the Tamils vote? Yes, Tamils must exercise their right to vote, wherever they have a reasonable choice. For example, if there are LSSP or CP candidates contesting in their electorates, they would be recommended to be hopefully supported by the Tamils at least to show their gratitude to these parties which have consistently advocated equality for the Tamils, so far, and stood by their principles steadfastly through thick and thin over the post-independence era.

3. What else should the Tamils do? We must place Tamil national unity and the urgently needed concrete, concerted actions, well ahead of individualistic aspirations for political power or associated recognition. There is good and bad in every one. This applies to politically active and other individuals, as well as to political groups and parties. We must accept that there are merits, talents and usable potentials in all of us. Once it is subjectively realised that someone or some group is in all probability above the 50% to 70% levels of goodness, they should be accepted, accommodated, tolerated and absorbed into our schemes and plans to achieve our common goal, and not be suspected, cold-shouldered, or sabotaged as rivals, competitors and enemies. As far as the Tamils are concerned, **we all have a single goal,** viz., to liberate ourselves and Tamil Eelam from Sinhala political domination and oppression, and to win equal rights and opportunities in the Island of Eelam. Recent events have demonstrated that LTTE is the major group spearheading the Tamils' cause. It is essential wisdom that all other political parties and individuals accept this fact and act accordingly, in the common interest. While all Tamils must thus act unitedly, it would be vital to similarly establish understanding and unity with the Muslims. Extending the same principle to the All-Island level, the goodness in the Sinhalas also must be appreciated and built upon, for the Tamils to solve their problems effectively in a lasting manner.

4. An opportunity not to be missed: The President has really provided a golden opportunity for the Tamils to demonstrate their determination, unity and clear-headedness. Let's not miss this opportunity to show our disgust at the way we have been treated, by not jostling for slippery seats. Let us vote wisely for candidates who clearly support our cause, or not vote at all.

– Prof. Kopan Mahadeva,
Birmingham.

DID JESUS LIVE IN INDIA?

I READ with interest the article 'Did Jesus Live in India?' (*Tamil Times*, May, 1994). It was only last year that I visited the place of martyrdom and tomb of St. Thomas the Apostle, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, at Mylapore in Madras. While some of the historical details have been mixed up with legend, it is true that a Christian church has been in existence in South India from the first century A.D., and still survives as the Eastern Orthodox Church in Kerala which has had links with Syria. It would, therefore, not be implausible if it were proven that Jesus did in fact travel to the Himalayas between the age of 13 and 30.

The author of your article pleads for objectivity, but chooses to reject the books of the New Testament as a valid source of information. He dogmatically asserts that the Gospels cannot be accepted as a historical

Continued on page 33

● Amnesty International Calls for Commitment to Human Rights

As political parties in Sri Lanka start canvassing in the run up to parliamentary elections in August, Amnesty International's Secretary General today sent an open letter to all participating parties calling for them to make a public commitment to human rights protection.

'In the past decade, Sri Lanka has gone through a period of intense violence marked by flagrant and widespread violations of human rights, including mass political killings and "disappearances",' said the organization's Secretary General, Pierre Sané.

'Although some checks and safeguards have recently been introduced, a tremendous amount of work still needs to be done to protect the human rights of all people in Sri Lanka during peace as well as during conflict.'

In his letter, Pierre Sané made three key recommendations to the government that is elected:

– to bring the constitution of Sri Lanka into line with international standards as the current fundamental rights chapter does not, among other things, include the right to life.

– to stop security forces from being allowed to act with impunity by bringing those responsible for past human rights violations to justice. If government agents are allowed to get away with human rights violations, it is harder to prevent those violations in the future.

Continued on page 29

Politics of Reservation

by T.N. Gopalan

It was a sweet victory for the AIADMK in two by-elections to the state Assembly on May 26. Though the victory margin in both the constituencies had come down the fact that the Jayalalitha magic still worked on the electorate despite all the intense hate-Jaya campaigns of Dr. Subramaniam Swamy and Mr. Vazhapadi K. Ramamurthy, TNCC-I President and the evident disenchantment of the so-called middle classes over her style of functioning and that the Cong-I forfeited its security deposits in both the constituencies should have been doubly pleasing to the AIADMK.

But Chief Minister, Ms. Jaylalalitha could not savour the triumph for too long. More momentous events seem to be overtaking her, and right now she finds herself in a tight corner over the reservation issue. The entire opposition seems to have ganged up against her, and she is resorting to desperate stratagems to get out of the impasse.

As reported in the December 15 issue of this magazine, reservation of seats in educational institutions and in government jobs is considered a major achievement of the Dravidian parties and hence a holy cow.

Nowhere else has the suggestion for identifying the creamy layer among the backward castes and denying it the special privileges encountered greater hostility than here. And none dares, meaning no established political party, demands any change in the reservation formula in force now – 18 per cent for the Scheduled Castes, one per cent for the tribals, 30 per cent for the backward and 20 per cent for the most backward, leaving only 31 per cent for the general pool.

But then you have the Supreme Court ruling that in no case shall reservations exceed 50 per cent whereas it is 69 per cent in Tamil Nadu. A resolution was passed in the Assembly and bandh was observed in November, still later a bill was passed in the Assembly enabling the state government to provide for greater reservations than what obtains in the Centre's regime.

But then the Bill has to receive Presidential assent if it is to become an Act, and it is the Centre which has to recommend to the President on such a course of action. Mr. Narasimha Rao has his own difficulties in this regard. The memories of anti-Mandal agitations which rocked the northern parts in 1990 are still fresh, and he may not find it prudent to endorse a measure which could further alienate the forward castes. Anyway why should he care to mollify Ms. Jayalalitha who has been lampooning him and his party day in and day out? And of course there is this characteristic indecisiveness at work. And so the Centre is still sitting on the Tamil Nadu bill.

As it happens time and tide do not wait for Jayalalithas and Narasimha Raos. It is the beginning of the academic year here, and a final decision has to be made now on the reservation formula for admissions in educational institutions. For sometime the government did not know which way to go, and one of the universities decided to stick to the 50 per cent reservation as laid down by the Supreme Court, leaving the rest for the open competition. It so happened that when the university concerned, to which many engineering colleges are affiliated, announced its decision, Ms. Jayalalitha was away in Hyderabad, resting and reportedly finalising some cabinet changes. The Opposition lost no time in pouring scorn on her for her Neroesque indifference when the defenceless backward castes were being thrown to the wolves'. Caught red in the face, she returned to Madras post-haste and did the predictable thing to queer the pitch of Mr. Karunanidhi who had called for dharnas all over the state – a bandh again to protest the Centre's inaction on the bill. The bandh was of course successful, but did not mean much on the ground.

Then she came up with an innovation that only she and her party, founded by a man like MGR, is capable of. She announced that even while respecting the Supreme Court ruling, more seats would be created exclusively for the backward castes affected by the 19 per cent reduction in reservation.

That is for every 100 admissions, 19 additional seats would be created – but another 19 seats would have to go to the general pool too if the Supreme Court norms are to be respected! Since the backward caste reservation will still remain pegged at 50 per cent they will still have lost out anyway, never mind the increased seats! It is indeed a vicious circle.

A possible way out is to keep the additional 19 per cent in the general pool vacant. How the courts will view such a strategy remains to be seen.

That apart the sheer increase in numbers and the additional financial commitment are mind-boggling. Assuming only 19 per cent more seats are to be created (for the backward castes alone, that is), there will be 1813 more seats in professional courses, engineering, medical, agricultural, etc., 13,300 more in arts and science colleges and 1.08 lakh seats more in high schools. How could cash-strapped Tamil Nadu bear the huge outlay involved is difficult to understand. Further, whether the all-India educational bodies concerned would allow the creation of additional seats on such a scale is another imponderable. Anyway with none caring to wait for the court verdict or for an objective assessment of the ground realities, such antics are inevitable.

To make matters more difficult for Ms. Jayalalitha, reservations in the neighbouring Karnataka are a whopping 73 per cent. Does not the court ruling bind that government? Well, Ms. Jayalalitha says that none from Karnataka has gone to court on the matter whereas in the case of Tamil Nadu the government is locked up in the Supreme Court on the issue – already it is facing a contempt petition for not honouring its ruling in 1993-94 admissions.

It may be noted here that as per the 1991 census, 88 per cent of the state's crore population, 3.70 crore fall in the backward and most backward categories and 1.12 crores in the SC/ST categories – that is as much as 88 per cent of the total population.

While it is but sensible the socially backward should get additional benefits, care should be taken to see that the benefits do not remain confined to the families or castes which were among the first to reap the benefits of reservations – in other words the creamy layer has to be excluded and the economically most backward among the forward communities too should get some reservation. Whether the more

Continued on page 28

Continued from page 27

backward among the BCs are too very enthusiastic about the present scheme of things in which their more advanced compatriots corner it all, is a moot point. Of course the forward communities here are weak numerically, besides lacking in militancy, and hence no trouble could erupt from those quarters.

Anyway almost all major parties are vying with each other to champion the cause of the backward castes. The AIADMK had its bandh, the DMK dharna and its allies dharna and the Vai.Gopalasamy's MDMK has proposed picketing in New Delhi and Madras. The Cong-I has denounced Ms. Jayalalitha for her indifference though it has not taken part in any action programme, and the CPM has expressed its support for reservation even if it did not participate in the DMK-led dharna.

For the first time in her career, Ms. Jayalalitha has sought to carry other parties with her – evidently because she is now under pressure and does not know her way out – appealing to them to join her in a delegation to wait on the Centre. So far none has taken the bait – doing so could be tantamount to exonerating her of the 'crime' of letting down the BCs. The opposition would rather prefer her to defy the court and then face the music!

Incidentally the MDMK gave a good account of itself in the Perundurai by-election, pushing the DMK-supported CPI to the third place and the AIADMK victory margin was lower. Even in Mylopore through the Vai.Go party polled hardly 10,000 votes it was only 2,000 votes less than that polled by a party like the Cong-I. Thus MDMK has established itself as a credible opposition and has now been recognised by the Election Commission.

The solace for the DMK is that its vote bank seems relatively intact, the Mylopore losing margin being hardly 5,700. In both cases the winning margin of the AIADMK has come down considerably since 1991.

If the DMK had polled the MDMK votes too it could have won in both the places. But the MDMK is now irretrievably lost to the DMK. To make up for which it could join hands with the Cong-I which is now even more desperate than after the Palani election defeat a few months ago. The forfeiture of deposits in both the constituencies has proved a terrible loss of face to the party and it is desperately in search of an ally – the State unit plumping for the DMK and the High Command for the AIADMK, on any terms laid down by the lady.

It is for Mr. Karunanidhi to manoeuvre his way through in this scenario if he is keen on ousting Ms. Jayalalitha next time round. Already the PMK which joined hands with the DMK in the reservation dharna has said it is a precursor for electoral alliance, and Mr. Karunanidhi too seems to endorse the idea. From here to a broader front may not be far off if he plays his cards well and Ms. Jayalalitha continues with her imperious ways.

European Parliament Resolution on Sri Lanka

The following is the text of the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 22 April 1994:

The European Parliament

– having regard to the motion of resolution by Mr. Saby and others on the situation in Sri Lanka and the problem of the LTTE (B3-1275/92),

– having regard to its resolution of 16 September 1988 on the political situation in Sri Lanka,

– having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security and the opinion of the Committee on Development and Cooperation (A3-0236/94),

A. recognizing the interest and duty of the European Union to help protect democracy and to promote respect for human rights in Sri Lanka, where universal adult suffrage has existed since 1931, longer than anywhere else in Asia,

B. recognizing that for many years democracy has been under attack from terrorist organisations and alarmed by the resurgence of violent actions by the LTTE in the Jaffna Peninsular, which cost hundreds of lives in October and November 1993,

C. recognizing that, at the height of the second JVP insurgency in 1988-1989, when the government resorted to the raising of locally recruited and controlled (and largely untrained) militias, widespread abuses of human rights, especially indiscriminate murder and disappearances, were perpetrated by both sides and that the recent discovery of a mass grave at Suriyakande is a sad reminder of this period,

D. recognizing the determination to maintain democracy in Sri Lanka, demonstrated by the holding of free and fair regional elections in May 1993 less than a month after the assassination of the former President, in which the opposition won control of three out of seven Provincial Councils,

E. recognizing the determined efforts of the Indian Government to curtail the illegal activities of the LTTE in Tamil Nadu,

F. recognizing that the withdrawal of Indian forces from Sri Lanka, through agreement between Colombo and Delhi, has greatly improved interstate relations,

1. Calls upon the Government of Sri Lanka to implement in full the recommendations of the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances and of Amnesty International;

2. Calls upon the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that the media function in an unfettered manner, free of intimidation and coercion;

3. Calls on the Commission to establish, without further delay, a permanent Mission in Colombo, which has been under consideration since the mid 1980s;

4. Calls on the European Union, as part of its common foreign and security policy, to close all offices of the LTTE in the territory of Member States, since they are used to propagate terrorism against a friendly country and to extort funds from Tamils living in the territory of the European Union for the pursuit of violent actions;

5. Calls on the European Union to assist those of all communities in Sri Lanka who are struggling to defend human rights and democracy and, in particular, urges support for the Jaffna University Teachers Association, whose members, at great risk, keep a record of human rights abuses by both the LTTE and the security forces in the Jaffna Peninsular, and for the Council for Liberal Democracy, a non-party organisation actively engaged in trying to bring all parties to come to a democratic settlement of the ethnic conflict;

6. Appeals to the Sri Lankan Government and Parliament to put into

Continued on page 29

Continued from page 28

force legislation to protect human rights, including the Human Rights Commission Bill;

7. Calls on the Sri Lankan authorities to bring to justice those responsible for grave abuses of human rights, especially during the suppression of the JVP rebellion, and to ensure that those believed to have been guilty of human rights abuses, or of condoning them, whether directed at Sinhalese, Tamils or other Sri Lankans, are removed from positions of power;

8. Calls upon the Government of Sri Lanka to issue death certificates to the next of kin of persons reported missing or believed to be dead, after one year or more of such disappearance;

9. Reminds the Sri Lankan Government that it accepted a recommendation of the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances that if corpses were discovered, believed to be those of people who had disappeared, it could ask for the help of international forensic experts, and believes that such experts should be employed to examine the mass graves at Suriyakande;

10. Urges the Sri Lankan authorities to end the practice of repeated arrests of people who have already established that they are not supporters of terrorism;

11. Urges the Government of Sri Lanka to consider teaching of the Tamil language in schools in the South and correspondingly to make available facilities for the teaching of the Sinhala language in the North and East of the country;

12. Believes that a useful form of aid from the European Union to Sri Lanka would be the provision of books and educational equipment for the teaching of the English language;

13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the Governments of India and Sri Lanka.

Continued from page 25

government established illegally by Ian Smith and secured the independence of Zimbabwe both from British imperial rule and the settler usurpation.

25. Nationalist guerrilla movements have fought to secede from individual states as well. Bangladeshi nationalist guerrillas fought for the secession of the province of East Pakistan from the federal state of Pakistan and succeeded in founding the independent state of Bangladesh with Indian military support. In Cyprus Turkish nationalist guerrillas fought for the secession of the Turkish populated northern part of that small island from majority Greek rule and succeeded with Turkish military support. In Ethiopia the Eritrean nationalist guerrillas fought for 30 years to secure the secession of the province of Eritrea from the Ethiopian state and succeeded in 1993, establishing the new state of Eritrea. Palestinian nationalist guerrillas of the PLO and its satellite organisations have fought the state of Israel, with the help of their Arab neighbours, for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip for the last 6 years and last month secured the withdrawal of the occupying Israeli army from the Gaza Strip and Jericho. The eventual, and now inevitable, establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank will entail its secession from the state of Jordan of which it is now *de jure* a part. In Viet Nam the Viet Cong, the most celebrated nationalist guerrillas of recent times, fought for 10 years for the re-unification of their divided country and succeeded in 1974 when the US army which had propped up the puppet regimes in South Viet Nam withdrew. All these are cases in which nationalist guerrilla movements succeeded against conventional armies and established the independent states they sought for their nations.

(To be continued in next issue).

International Health Conference to Focus on Victims of War in Sri Lanka

An international conference to address the health problems and specific health care needs of the victims of war in Sri Lanka is due to be held in London in September this year. The conference is being jointly organised by two UK based organisations, Medical Institute of Tamils (MIOT) and the Tamil Information Centre (TIC) in association with the Tamil Refugee Organisation of California, USA.

Participation in the two-day conference is open to doctors, nurses, health planners, service providers, voluntary agencies and researchers. The event is expected to provide a unique opportunity to the participants to share information about the health care needs of victims of war and to arrive at a consensus as to the best way of meeting them.

A spokesman for the organisers said that the conference would also serve as a preparatory forum for wider participatory health initiative in the Tamil homeland in 1995.

The conference will be addressed by academics and health practitioners from Sri Lanka, India and Western countries and also by officers from NGOs and victims.

Conference Topics Include:

Health services in the war zone
Food and medicine shortages
Nutritional status
Emotional & psychological problems
Rehabilitation of people traumatised by war, detention and torture.
health education and promotion
Training of health workers
Relief and helth care efforts of the ICRC & UNHCR and other local and international agencies
Health care of refugees in the host countries
Role of the Western media
Development assistance

Anyone interested in attending the conference or in submitting papers for the conference journal are requested to contact:

The Conference Co-ordinator
MIOT/TIC
720 Romford Road
London E12 6I3T
United Kingdom

Tel: 081-514 6390
Fax: 0322 – 440881

Continued from page 26

– to ratify international humanitarian standards, including the Second Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions which protects non-combatants in internal conflicts from murder, mutilation, torture or cruel treatment and prohibits hostage-taking. If ratified, this would apply to all parties involved in conflict.

CLASSIFIED ADS

First 20 words £10. Each additional word 60p. Charge for Box No. £3. (Vat 17½% extra) Prepayment essential
The Advertisement Manager, Tamil Times Ltd.,
PO Box 121, Sutton, Surrey SM1 3TD
Phone: 081-644 0972 Fax: 081-241 4557

MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Hindu sister *seeks fair, pretty, educated bride, 25 or younger for brother, 30, Computer Systems Analyst programmer, UK permanent resident. Send details, horoscope, photograph. M 737 c/o Tamil Times.*

Srilankan Tamil parents *in Australia seek preferably qualified partner, mid-thirties to early forties, for their attractive graduate daughter in good employment, Australian citizen. Send details to P.O.Box 1227, Narre Warren 3804 Victoria, Australia.*

Parents *seek professionally qualified partner in late thirties for doctor daughter, U.S. resident. M 739 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Tamil parents *seek doctor or other high academically qualified bride for doctor son, 32, practising in Australia. Please send all details M 740 c/o Tamil Times.*

Hindu mother *seeks pretty professionally qualified partner for son, 31, Ph.D., UK university lecturer, tall, medium complexion, no mars affliction. Horoscope, photograph and details expected. M 741 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu Tamil brother *seeks partner for his very affluent brother, post graduate engineer, mid forties, innocent divorcee, UK citizen working in USA. Send horoscope, details. M 742 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek qualified groom for their pretty doctor daughter, 30, 5', working in Colombo hospital. Send horoscope, details. M 743 c/o Tamil Times.*

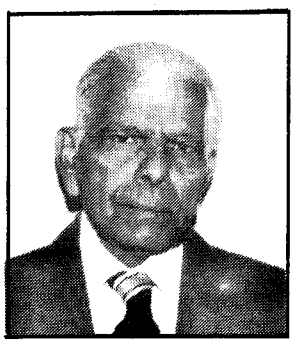
WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couple on their recent wedding.

Manogarasingam *son of Dr. & Mrs. Kandasamy of Kalvattai, Karaveddy, Sri Lanka and* **Santhanayahi** *daughter of Dr. & Mrs. Paramalingam of 334 KKS Road, Vannarponnai, Jaffna on 3.7.94 at High School Hall, Kingsbury, London NW9.*

OBITUARIES

Mr. Viswalingam Sivagnanasundram *(Retired Chief Accountant, Agrarian Services, Colombo); beloved husband of Mahaluxmi; loving father of Lalitha, Sivakumar – London – (formerly Chief Engineer, Buildings Dept., Colombo), Dr. Surendrakumar – London – (formerly at Leeds University) and Sundaraluxmi (Canada); father-in-law of Balasubramaniam (Chief Clerk, Kandavalai), Kamalakanthi, Gowri Manohari and Sooriyapalan (Accountant, Canada); brother of Thillainayaki Sundarampillai (London) and Meenambikai Sinnathurai; grandfather of Sharmini, Roshan, Muhunthini, Veena, Arunan, Nishanthi, Rudran and Praveen passed away on 9th July and funeral took place on 11th July in Chavakachcheri – 4 Argyle Gardens, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 5HB. Tel: 081 905 6992/081 381 2285.*



Mr. Chinnathampy – Rasiah *(Retired Accountant, Agrarian Services) of Nunavil, Chavakachcheri, Dearly beloved husband of Gunamany (Retired Teacher of Drieberg College, Chavakachcheri and Methodist College, Colombo); loving father of Dr. Rajan Rasiah (Gynaecologist, Melbourne) and Rajini (San Francisco); father-in-law of Janaki and Lakshman Wattawala; affectionate grandfather of Thabojan, Prashanth and Sulakshan and brother of late Rasammah Thampoe (Meesalai), Arianayagam Swaminathan (Nunavil), late Annapooranam Chelliah (Manipay) and late Dr. Swaminathan (Nunavil) passed away in Melbourne on 24th April 94. Funeral took place on Saturday 30th April 94 in Australia. – 14 Greenbriar Avenue, Wheelers Hill, Vic.3150, Melbourne, Australia. Tel: 3 – 5621310.*

Mr. Sinnar Subramaniam *of Kantharmadam, Jaffna; beloved husband of late Kanagammah Subramaniam; loving father of Mrs. Sotheeswary Shanmuganathan (U.K.), Dr. (Mrs.) Sathialuxmy Selvadurai (James Cook University, Queensland, Australia) and Mr. Parameswaran Subramaniam (Thames Link Health Care Services, N.H.S. Trust, Faculty of Health, Dartford, Kent, U.K.); father-in-law of late Mr. Shanmuganathan and Mr. Selvadurai (Australia); grandfather of Radhika, Sangeetha, Laksmanan and Kishani passed away peacefully on 26th May 94 at 5 Amman Road, Kantharmadam, Jaffna and cremation took place at Kombayan Manal Crematorium, Jaffna on 27.5.94.*

An Athma Shanthi Poojah in his memory was held in Highgate Hill Murugan Temple, London on 26th June 94.

The members of the family wish to convey their very sincere thanks to all relatives and friends who visited them, sent messages of sympathy, attended the funeral and attended the Athma Shanthi Poojah. They regret their inability to thank them individually. – 4 Clarendon Gardens, Stone, Dartford, Kent DA2 6EZ. Tel: 0322 225462.

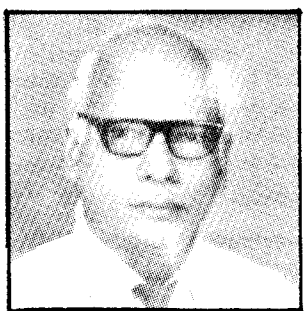
IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of **Mrs. Mankay Sivasamapu** *on the fourth anniversary of her passing away on 2.8.90.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by her two sons. – 15 Wolsey Way, Chessington, Surrey KT9 1XQ.

In loving memory of **Mr. Thambapillai Ramanathan** *on the second anniversary of his passing away on 21st July 1992.*

Sadly missed and lovingly remembered by his dear wife Nirmala Yogaranee, brothers, sisters, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nephews and nieces. – 9 Osborne Gardens, Thornton Heath, Surrey, U.K.



In loving memory of **Mr. Sampanther Cumaraswamy** *on the third anniversary of his passing away on 7th July 1991.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his wife Rasaletchumy, his children, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren – 22 Calder Gardens, Edgware, Middx. HA8 5PT.

In everloving memory of **Mrs. Sushila Jayaratnam** *who pased away on 14.07.91.*
Change indicates the passing of time
Yet fulfilment is hard to come by
We carry on as you taught us to
Constantly missing your presence in
Every aspect of our lives
For no one can take your place
Amma.

Sorrowfully remembered by your husband Jayam; daughters Kalyani, Tharani and Sumanthini; son-in-law Kanahendran; and sisters Kamala and Indra. – P.O.Box 174, Gaborone, Botswana.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

August 3 *Eekathasi.*

Aug. 4 *Pirathosam.*

Aug. 6 *Transfiguration of Lord Jesus.*

Aug. 7 *Aadi Amavasai.*

Aug. 7 *10.00am* ***London Sri Murugan Temple Chariot Festival*** *at 78 Church Road, Manor Park, London E12. Tel: 081 478 8433.*

Aug. 9 *Aadi Pooram.*

Aug. 10 *Sathurthi.*

Aug. 14 *Assumption of Our Lady Mary.*

Aug. 17 *Eekathasi.*

Aug. 18 *Pirathosam.*

Aug. 19 *Varalakshmy Viradham.*

Aug. 20 *Full Moon.*

Aug. 20 *6.00pm South London Tamil Welfare Group presents 'A Grand Cultural Evening' of Dance, Flute, Violin and Veena Recitals; Miruthangam and Vilupaddu.*

Aug. 22 *Feast of The Queenship of Mary.*

Aug. 27 *Narthana Kalalaya presents Bharatha Natya Arangetram of Subashini Kugaprasad, disciple of Pathmini Gunaseelan at Assembly Hall, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17. Chief Guest: Mr. M. Sivasithamparam, Former Deputy Speaker, Sri Lanka. All Welcome.*

Aug. 29 *Sri Krishna Jayanthi.*

Aug. 29 *9.30am* **J.S.S.A. Cricket & Netball Festival 1994** *at Warren Farm Sports Centre, Windmill Lane, Southall, Middx. For details Tel: 081 952 7293/241 5881/743 8289.*

At the Bhawan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 071 381 3086/ 4608.

Aug. 6 *7.30pm* **Bharatiyar Songs & Devotional Music** *by* **Rajkumar Bharathi** *from India.*

Aug. 16 *Indian Independence Day Celebrations. All welcome.*

Aug. 28 *Krishna Janmashtami Bhajans, Buja & Prasad. All welcome.*

World Saiva Council

3rd Annual Conference

The Third Annual Conference of the World Saiva Council was held on 25th and 26th June 1994 at the Sithy Vinayagar Temple in Aubervilliers, Paris. Prof. K.P. Aravaanan of Pondicherry University and Mr. K. Shanmugalingam, Director, Department of Hindu Affairs, Sri Lanka delivered the keynote addresses followed by several delegates.

London Meikandan Aadheenam released (a) Saiva Thirumurai Hymn cassettes and (b) a book on 'Saivite Hinduism' to mark the occasion.

After the Secretary General's annual report was adopted, the General Council elected Messrs. K. Thayaparan and K. Shanmugalingam, who attended the conference as officials from the Department of

Continued on page 32

The First Death Anniversary of the Late N.R. Balasingam – An Appreciation –

The news of the sudden death of my good friend Bala (Nagamuthu Richard Balasingam) on the 21.7.94 reached me a few weeks later. I was deeply grieved as I never thought I would lose him so early.

My friendship with Bala dates back to half a century ago when we studied at Jaffna College, Vaddukoddai. We kept in close touch over this period except for the short period of his tour of duty in Nigeria. I met him in Sydney last July and we sat together on a few occasions and recalled our student days and common friends.

He looked quite fit but complained of a slight heart condition. Like many others he could have extended his stay in Australia, but he chose to get back to Colombo in January '93. From there he maintained a steady correspondence with me. Although he died at the age of 67, without much suffering, I feel he could have lived longer.

Bala was the second of the four children of Mr. and Mrs. K.J. Nagamuthu (both teachers) of Varany, Jaffna. He lost his mother in his teens; but his father spared no pains or money to bring the children in a way that they never felt the absence of their mother. It is a fitting tribute to the parents that all four children have given their best to the Education Service of Sri Lanka.

Bala's career at Jaffna College was a distinguished one. It was also unique in the sense that he did his Junior, Senior, and Tertiary levels of education – all at Jaffna College. After passing his Intermediate in Arts in July 1945, he was one of three or four students with whom Rev. S.K. Bunker started for the first time the London B.A. class. In July 1948, the first batch was presented and Bala (if my memory is correct) was the only one who passed – passed in the Second class with English, History and Economics. That indeed was a brilliant achievement. In those days for a young man with a second class degree of the London University, there were grand opportunities in the Civil List appointments of the Public Service or in the management positions of the Banking Service. He made a few half-hearted attempts, but was not lucky. Besides, as soon as the results were out, the late Mr. K.T. John, Principal of American Mission College Udupiddy, persuaded Bala's elder brother N.S. Rathinasingham (who was on the staff) to prevail on Bala to join the staff. There Bala was quite a popular teacher of the English Language, Literature and History. After about two years he joined the staff of Sandalankawa Central School where he was equally popular. There he formed a lasting friendship with K.N. Jayatileke who died about five years ago. After a two year spell at Sandalankawa he joined the Inspectorate of the Department of Education in 1981. While in the Inspectorate he passed the Diploma-in-Education and later went on a British Council Scholarship to England where he collected a Diploma in the Teaching of English as a Second Language.

Bala was rather reserved and had few friends; but the few he had he 'grappled them with hoops of steel'. His greatest asset (and failing too!) was his fearless outspoken temperament. He rarely minced words even with his superiors and most often earned their displeasure and lost a couple of promotions. He had the courage of his own convictions and on many occasions sympathised and supported the cause of downtrodden teachers. At the same time he bravely defended dedicated principals against political victimisation. Although in the course of his duties in various parts of the country he came into contact with political heavy weights, he never sought their patronage or favour for his own benefit.

He lived the life of a good Christian despite his not too regular attendance at church. His love for his wife and children was intense and abiding. He sacrificed much more than an average Jaffna parent for the sake of his children. To his beloved wife, Ruby, the loss is as heavy as it is irreparable. They say a tree is known by its fruits. If that yardstick is used, Bala's children are testimony to the fact that his life's work had not been in vain.

After cremation in Colombo, his ashes had been taken to his home town Varany for internment – and most appropriately so.

May his soul rest in peace.

K. Jeganathan,

(former Principal, Colombo Hindu College, Ratmalana), Transkei, South Africa.

Continued from page 31

Hindu Affairs, Sri Lanka, to the Central Executive. Invitations to hold the next conference, in Colombo, Durban and London were received. A decision will be made in due course. The conference terminated with a vote of thanks to the Paris committee and particularly to Mr. P.S. Patkunarajah, the secretary and chief co-ordinator for successfully organising the conference.

Thanuja – Tradition Bound

Like a lone sparrow she emerged from the side curtains, surveyed the empty stage of the Sadler's Wells Lilian Baylis Theatre, hesitantly announced the first number. There was no mike, no assemblage of orchestral artistes. Suddenly there wafted the distant strains of a Tampura, her face brightened and she erected herself in Natyaramba pose to dance Natyanjali to the full orchestral music and Nattuvangam that came from behind the screen.

This Bharata Natya recital by Thanuja Mohanan on 22nd May, was an unexpected treat. The London audience which is used to Bharata Natya performances with an assemblage on the stage, had a different experience. It was a simple artistic exercise before a small knowledgeable audience without any publicity frills. As the neatly produced profile informs, Thanuja was born in Kerala, had her first lessons in Bharata Natyam at the age of four there, and followed her training in the UK, first under Thangamanikutty Ammal of Calcutta Kalamandalam fame and later at the London Bhavan Centre under Sri Prakash Yadagudde. That was not all. She wanted to breathe the authentic and fresh Bharata Natya air of India and went to Madras to undergo an intensive course under the well known Kalakshetra pair Shantha – Dhananjayans and returned after a formal Arangetram there.

The special performance by Thanuja Mohanan the other day was fully tradition bound, though by one who has lived in the UK since childhood. From the opening Ntayanjali and the following Jatiswaram her entry into the superb Varnam by Dandayuthapanipillai on Mannargudi Rajagopala exhibited her artistry and communicative skill. Thanuja's grasp of the fundamentals and understanding of the real South Indian traditions is remarkable. Her Thillana in Behag and Khanda Ekam was superbly executed. Thanuja has not only imbibed the expertise of Dhananjayan but also seems to have brought with her his terminologies for Varnam and Thillaana – Nrityopaharam and Nrittangaharam!

It is pleasant to know that this new star in London is to get married shortly to the most loved Mridangam maestro Bhavani Shankar. A wonderful union which will receive blessings from all art lovers.

– Sivapatha Sundaram.

Vijayambikai Awarded Doctorate in Bharata Natyam

Mrs. Vijayambikai Indrakumar, the well known Bharata Natyam and Kuchipudi dancer and choreographer has been awarded an honorary Doctor of Philosophy in Bharata Natyam by the Inter American University of Humanistic Studies, U.S.A. in recognition of her 'distinguished achievements at International Level in the field of Bharata Natyam'. Indian dancer Sudharani Ragupathy, Music maestro T.V. Gopalakrishnan and T.M. Sounderarajan are among those similarly honoured.

1994-95 marks the Silver Jubilee of Vijayambikai's dance career which has been noted for her innovative choreography as in adapting the Bolshoi ballet 'Swan Lake' to the Indian dance drama format. She was invited by the Soviet Union to perform in the Bolshoi Theatre in 1983.

London Artistes Visit Melbourne To Aid Temple

Sivasakthi Sivanesan, well known Carnatic Singer and teacher, Prakash Yadagudde, Bharata Natyam dancer and teacher and Nina Rajarani, Bharata Natyam dancer all from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, London are visiting Melbourne, Australia as guests of The Hindu Society of Victoria to provide a benefit performance in aid of the Shiva Vishnu Temple in Carrum Downs. The temple had its Maha Kumbabishekam on 22nd May 1994. The Carnatic Vocal and Bharata Natyam recitals are to be held on Friday, 19th August 1994 at 8.00pm at Caulfield Arts Complex – corner of Glen Eira Road and Hawthorn Road. For tickets and information. Tel: 499 2284/ 887 0382/459 6363.

Music Cassette Review

Saiva Thirumurai Hymns *released by London Meikandan Aadheenam.*

It was my pleasant privilege to listen to the Saiva Thirumurai sung by ***Tamil Isaimani Mrs. Nageswari Brahmananda*** *and released by the London Meikandan Aadheenam. These hymns have been so well rendered as not only to present the traditional style of the Saiva Temple Othuwars but also to portray the meaning of the hymns through clarity of Tamil diction.*

The selection and arrangement of the hymns by the Aadheenam gives pride of place to all twelve Thirumurai hymns and are well chosen and representative. The cassette contains fifteen hymns including Thevarem, Thiruvacagam, Thiruvisaippa, Thiruppallandu, Periyapuranam, Thirumantiram and concludes with Thiruppukal.

The style of Thirumurai singing of this artist compares favourably with the styles of Sri Thandapani Thesigar of Annamalai University and of Sri Sundara Othuvar of Thirunelveli. In particular the hymn beginning 'Aduththanai' not only contains fine musical embellishments but also conveys lofty Saiva Siddhanta doctrine to all listeners.

By the Grace of the Almighty, the artiste is already blessed with a melodious voice and listening to the cassette, it truly melts our hearts in bhakti. This Saiva Thirumurai Hymn Cassette is a religious treasure and is a must in every Saiva home.

Dr. S. Gangadaran,
Head, Dept. of Saiva Siddhanta, Madurai Kamparaj University, Madurai – 625021.

(Cassette priced at £3 post free available from L.M.A. Trust, Tel: 081 531 6435/0268 76624/0277 223981).

Examination Successes

Our congratulations to **Tiasho Mather** *on her success in the MBCHB examination with merits in Medicine and Surgery. She is the youngest of 22 examinees in her batch and is the youngest daughter of Dr. & Mrs. A.S. Mather of Edinburgh, U.K.*

Mr. Rajeev Malalgoda *of Chelmsford, Essex has obtained a First Class degree in Computer Science from the University of Bristol and is due to accept employment with I.B.M. (UK) Ltd. He is a former pupil of King Edward VI Grammar School and St. John's, Billericay.*

Rajeev is the son of Dr. Mahinda Malalgoda and Indra (nee Rajendram).

Our congratulations to Rajeev.

Private Tuition
Pure/Applied Mathematics. Statistics, Physics O/A Level, Homes visited.
Tel: 081-864 3227

Pandit Navaratnam, *International Astro-Palmo-Numerologist, formerly of Navalar Road, Jaffna is now in London on a short holiday and those wishing to see him please telephone him on:* **081-573 6709**

Ravi Ramdas – A Maestro in the Making

Saturday, 9 July 1994 was a red letter day for young Ravi Ramdas: the day of his vocal Arangetram at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London.

As he ascended the stage (which had been set with a simple, yet tasty decor) along with his accompanying musicians, did the traditional 'Namaste' and sat down to invoke the blessings of Lord Dakshinamurthy through a Slokam, the listeners were conscious of his captivating, mellifluous voice and its special sweetness.

'Sri Maha Ganapathe' in Nattai and the preceding raga alapana brought out in focus his remarkable ability to catch the characteristic nuances of the raga and his capacity to use brigas to effect. This was reinforced through the next piece 'Meenakshi Taaye' in Abogi when the full raga bhava was portrayed. The neraval and the swaraprastara which followed showed new dimensions of his versatility. Saint Thyagaraja's Ghana Raga Pancharatna keertana 'Sadinchane' was rendered flawlessly. The following piece before the intermission was 'Sambho Mahadeva' with crisp raga alapana, chaste neraval and intricate patterns of swara rendering.

The Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi in Thodi was offered with a near-professional finesse, with a difficult tala setting in 'tisra jampai' and sancharas through Behag, Sivaranjani, Hindolam and Sahana ragas, which made many in the audience wonder, as in the case of Goldsmith's village school master, 'how such a small head could contain all it knew'!

The 'thukkadas' which followed were pleasing to the ears, particularly 'Baro Krishnaya' (in Ragamalika) and 'Kuzhaludi Vilayadi Va' (in raga Bagesri) which were lifting and touched our hearts.

Arangetram is an event when a student has the debut of his or her performance before a discerning audience whose approbation should be earned before the student can proceed on a musical career. One can unhesitatingly say that Ravi came out of the stringent test with flying colours. His Guru Smt. Sivasakti Sivanesan's satisfied smile confirmed this. By his excellent rendering of items such as 'Baro Krishnayya' (which I understand he learnt from Shri T.K. Govinda Rao), Ravi has shown that he can absorb different styles and make them his own, 'grappling them to his soul with hoops of steel' (to use Shakespearian imagery). Some years ago we awarded him a prize at the London Music Circle competitions and I noted the great strides he had made even from that high level. The Bhavan indeed deserves warm kudos for preparing and launching such a star musical artiste.

V.K. Chandrasekhar provided apt support on the Violin. His Abogi and Panthuvarali raga expositions were noteworthy. The Mridangam-Ghatam interaction between K.S. Bhavani Shankar and R.N. Prakash was a treat to hear. The Morsing contribution by K. Sithamparanathan enriched the percussion support. Dr. Vasanthasree provided the tanpura support and Priya Ramdas did a good job of the compering.

P.P. Kanthan.

Continued from page 26

source, yet finds no difficulty in seeking evidence for his theory in the book of Genesis written centuries before, and whose historicity is much more contested. I have carefully checked the references quoted in the article, Genesis 29 and Joshua 24:2-3, and cannot find any reasonable reference to India. I have also not been able to find the reference to the land of the five rivers on which the author heavily relies. (The Creation Story in Genesis 2 describes a river in the Garden of Eden which divided into **four** branches named Pishon, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates and probably refers to the region identifiable with Babylon or Iraq of today).

The dating of the books of the New Testament has been the subject of much research and controversy. A view held by some scholars is that all the books of the New Testament were written before the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the revered Temple of Jerusalem in A.D.70, as there is no overt reference to this major event in any of the books of the New Testament. Most authorities believe that the books were written before the end of the first century. Even if one accepts the dates given in the article, the Synoptic Gospels were written in the life time of the eye-witnesses of Jesus and cannot be lightly dismissed as non-historical. The accounts in the Gospels do vary in detail in much the same way as would various newspaper reports of a contemporary event.

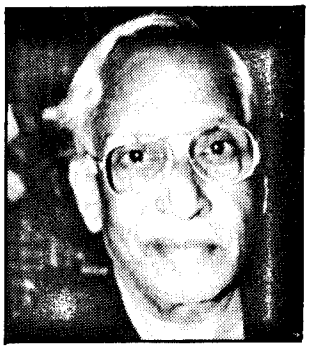
While the primary motive in writing the Gospels was theological, the writers have attached importance to historical accuracy (Luke 1:1-4). there are many references to historical events as in Luke 3:1-2: 'In the fifteenth year of the Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, when Herod was prince of Galilee, his brother Philip, prince of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias prince of Abilene, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.' The Roman historians quoted, living far away, were presumably more interested in kings and rulers than in the religious beliefs of a subject race, and cannot be considered a reliable witness to the life of Jesus except to prove that he did exist.

The question of what Jesus did between the ages of 13 and 30 is not known. Tradition has it that he worked as a carpenter to look after his widowed mother and family. Whether Jesus lived in India as your author believes or subsequently in America as the Mormons believe, makes very little difference to the life and work of Jesus which is faithfully recorded in the Gospels, and available to anyone to read without adherence to any dogma.

As I am not sufficiently familiar with the works of the scholars and authors quoted in the article, I am reluctant to comment on their views. However, the list is highly selective. Bultmann and Kasemann represent particular views which are by no means universally accepted. To rely on Bertrand Russell, a self professed atheist, to define the nature of religious faith, betrays a bias and lack of objectivity in the article. How does a reader of *Tamil Times* check the accuracy of the information contained in 'manuscripts written in Pali which were reportedly in the possession of the then Dalai Lama' or whether the 'Issa' refers to the Jesus in question or another person by the common name of that time? How does the article enhance the thinking of the Tamils of the Dispersion apart from alienating the Christian minority? Should not speculative articles of this nature be published in an academic journal after suitable peer review, so that the validity of the sources of information can be questioned?

Pararasan Arulanantham,
3, St. Johns Church Road,
Folkestone, Kent CT19 5BQ.

Dr. K.S. Nadarajah – an Appreciation



Dr. K.S. Nadarajah was an extremely humble and unassuming individual. He would rather let others do the talking and listen patiently rather than talk about the many things that were important to him. Yet Dr. Nadarajah's life and work captured the hearts and minds of Tamils all over the world. The spontaneous outpouring of tributes from various parts of the globe following his passing, the grief and sorrow shown by the thousands of those who attended his funeral held in Toronto and the many who paid their last respects in various other ways, bear witness to the greatness of our dear friend and teacher.

Personally I feel very humble and extremely fortunate to have had a friend in Dr. Nadarajah. He always had a reasonable answer to many of life's difficult questions. For example, knowing that he was a vegetarian, I once asked him whether he considered it wrong to eat animal flesh. His response was characteristic. He said everything in the world is food, including animals, plants, animate and inanimate objects. By refraining from killing animals we are merely demonstrating our compassion to the extent we can. This helped me to understand that the important principle is compassion and the act of not eating animal flesh is just another application of that principle. It follows that the application of compassion can take many forms and vegetarianism being one of them.

Dr. Nadarajah has fulfilled many roles during his lifetime, he was a dedicated husband who cared deeply for his grieving widow Thangarani and a loving father to Vatsala and Mahilnan. A pioneer in the field of broadcasting in Sri Lanka, he served as the director of Tamil Services and Additional Director of National Services for the SLBC.

He also served as a member of the SLBC Board of Directors and the Sri Lanka Film Corporation Board of Directors. He has been described, in the tributes paid by former colleagues and others from SLBC as a man of principles, a strict administrator and a leader who was able to bring out the best in those who worked for him. He was also a lifelong student who started adult life as a teacher at Royal College and later went on to complete his doctorate.

More than anything else, however, he is best known for his great love for the Tamil language. Some observers have described him as one who lived and breathed with passion and enthusiasm for the Tamil language. His scholarly works on such literary classics as the Tholkapiam, the multitude of Tamil verse and literature authored by him and his contribution to documenting the history of the Tamils in Sri Lanka from the fourteenth century onwards have brought him wide recognition and the honourable title Navatkulioor Nadarajan. He was awarded the highest honour for literature by the Cultural Ministry in Sri Lanka. There are still many of his literary works yet to be published posthumously.

He stood like a beacon symbolizing the grandeur and majesty of the Tamil language at a time when Tamils all over the world are searching to restore pride in their language and culture.

In conclusion I would like to refer to a verse that he composed which is titled 'Ethaiyum Anjen.' He goes on to say Saavaiyum Anjen, Noyaiyum Anjen. Niththiyam Aanen. This surely must be a heartfelt reflection of a passage in the Upanishads which says 'But he who knows the joy of Brahman fears no more.'

May God grant him peace.

Chellaraj Retnanandan.

Pastor Marcus Navaratnarajah – An Appreciation

British Columbians, Srilankans, Multicultural and Evangelical communities were shocked by the sudden death of Pastor Marcus on May 15th 1994. Marcus had been known since early 50s for his enthusiastic work with SCM and JICCF in Jaffna. Scouting was his other interest. As a programme director at the Jaffna 'Y' he could be well remembered for his spirited and hilarious leadership.

His move to YMCA In Hong Kong was a loss to 'Y' in Sri Lanka. During his period in Hong Kong he became actively involved in the Asia Evangelistic Fellowship (AEF) based in Singapore.

When he left with his family to become a Canadian in the 80s his missionary spirits grew even stronger. The spiritual needs for the Asians in the West Coast of Canada was felt deeply by him. Thus he became the cynosure of several Christians of Asian origin from Philippines, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, India, Fiji and Sri Lanka. Marcus was there as a guide, comforter and above all a spiritual promoter to introduce the power of Christian faith.

With such expertise and talent he was an easy choice to be an active participant in the Multicultural Society of B.C.

His annual role as Master of Ceremonies at the Richmond Multi Fest is a testimony to it. He did not stop there, he went on to organise a Prayer Chain and visited people in dire straits. Tamil refugees from his own district were passionately treated with deep emotions. He was the key person behind the well organised Sri Lankan Christian Fellowship which meets regularly to pray, worship, meditate and socialise.

The pinnacle of his Christian Witness is when he was accepted as a pastor under B.C. Baptist Conference and Marcus became the founder member of the Hosanna International Christian Church. The Church reflects the Multi-Ethnicity in the province and caters to the needs of all. The vision of Marcus came to light.

His funeral service was held at the Broadmoor Baptist Church on May 21st 1994 amidst a very large gathering. B.C. Baptist Conference executive minister Wally Weiser led the service and gave the message. Tributes were paid by Pastor Jonathan James of Asia Evangelical Fellowship, Singapore and by Mr. John Garrison of Hosanna International Church. The Multi Cultural Trio including his daughter Tamara rendered a special song. Pastors of the district sang 'It Is Well With My Soul' and dedicated it to Marcus. The service came to an end with the entire congregation holding hands and singing 'Bind Us Together'. He was buried at the Boundary Bay cemetery and committal rites were performed by Pastors Tim Colborne and Wally Weiser.

After the burial people gathered at the church for fellowship lunch. At that time tributes, witnesses and appreciations were given by a large number which lasted over an hour. Pastor Marcus leaves behind his beloved wife Dhiviam, daughter Tamara, son-in-law Don, a host of family members in Sri Lanka, Australia and Canada and an array of faithfuls.

Let us thank God for his life.

C. Premarajah.

YOGA & CO

For all your legal work and conveyancing

Solicitors & Administrators of Oaths

47 Booth Road, Colindale, London NW9 5JS

Telephone: 081-205 0899

GLEN EXPRESS TRAVEL LTD

IATA 155 Notting Hill Gate, London W11 3LF IATA

Telephone: 071 221 3498 Fax: 071 243 8277

COMPETITIVE FARES TO COLOMBO, MADRAS, TRICHY, TRIVANDRUM SINGAPORE (WITH STOP IN COLOMBO), **AUSTRALIA** (WITH STOP IN COLOMBO) **& MALE**

ON

Kuwait Airways

Airlanka

Emirates

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

COMPETITIVE FARES TO OTHER DESTINATIONS AVAILABLE

SHIPPING AIR FREIGHT TRAVEL

TO COLOMBO AND OTHER WORLWIDE DESTINATIONS

PERSONAL EFFECTS, HOUSEHOLD GOODS, VEHICLES AND MACHINERIES

Appointed MAIN AGENT for AIR LANKA

Passenger Tickets & Unaccompanied Baggage

Special low fares to:

MADRAS/TRIVENDRUM/TRICHY (No Stop in Colombo)	£ 410
COLOMBO:	
AIR LANKA from	£ 420
GULF	£ 395
KUWAIT	£ 385
EMIRATE	£ 450
ROYAL JORDANIAN	£ 380

Please contact for other destinations

Low Unaccompanied Baggage rates to COLOMBO:

Sea Freight ---- £ 9.00 per Tea Chest
---- £ 2.00 per cu. ft.

Air Freight ---- £ 30.00 per 10 Kg.
(£ 1.50 for additional Kg.)

MADRAS ---- £ 1.50 per Kg.
TRIVENDRUM ---- £ 1.80 per Kg.

YOUR GOODS GO TO OUR BONDED WAREHOUSE IN COLOMBO

GLEN CARRIERS LIMITED
14 Allied Way, off Warple Way, Acton, London W3 0RQ
Telephone: 081-740-8379 : 081 - 749 0595
Fax: 081-740-4229 Telex: 929657 GLENCA G

A Trust Worthy Contact
You Cannot Afford To Do Without!

TRICO

Trico Provide You The Complete Service

(A) Shipping Tea Chest £8.95 1 Cu.ft. £1.98

(B) Airfreight – Competitive Rate

(C) Air Ticket – Competitive Fares

***To* Sri Lanka**

Try us and see the difference

Trico International (Fwd) Ltd.,
Stuart House, 1 River Park Road,
London N22 4TB
Tel: 081-888 8787 Fax: 081-889 5445

UNIWEST
INTERNATIONAL

30 Friern Barnet Road,
London N11 1NA
Tel : 081-361 5087 / 4937
081-368 9544
Fax : 081-361 8498

All goods are lodged in a modern, fully computerised. Bonded warehouse (outside the Port)
Ceylon Shipping Lines, 294/10 D.R.
Wijewardena Mawatha, Colombo 10. Tel: 432994/5

WE ARE THE BEST AND THE CHEAPEST

NO HIDDEN CHARGES

£8.50 PER TEA CHEST TO COLOMBO

Pianos (new & used) and all Duty Free goods supplied

Travel Agents for Air Lanka, Kuwait, Emirates, Gulf Air, Air France, KLM, Royal Jordanian, PIA and Balkan Airlines.

Katunayake International Airport Duty Free Shopping Guide available to our customers and permissible Duty Free allowance on goods shipped.